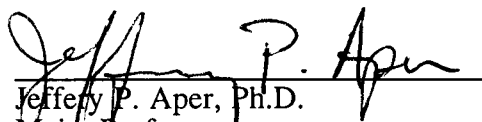


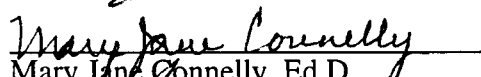
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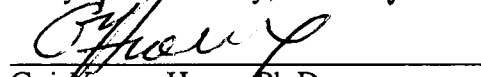
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Ruth Wang Liu entitled "Management of Personal and Perceived Parental Expectations for Educational and Career Achievements of Chinese-American Undergraduates." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Leadership Studies in Education.


Jeffrey P. Aper, Ph.D.
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:


E. Grady Bogue, Ed.D.


Mary Jane Connelly, Ed.D.


Gui Young Hong, Ph.D.

Accepted for the Council:


C. W. Minkel, Ph.D.
Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

**MANAGEMENT OF PERSONAL AND
PERCEIVED PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS FOR
EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS OF
CHINESE-AMERICAN UNDERGRADUATES**

**A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Ruth Wang Liu
May 1997**

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my parents

James and Anna Wang

whose unfailing love, support, and sacrifice

have been a continuous inspiration

to me

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Now at the culmination of my doctoral journey, I look back with fond memories of the many happy experiences leading to this point. To the wonderful students and faculty in Leadership Studies in Education who have made the journey so enjoyable, I extend my appreciation. Particularly to Judy Fry, Marc Cutright, Martha Eaves, and Barbara Norwood, my fellow sojourners, thanks for the warm memories of all the delightful times we have shared.

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To my wonderfully patient husband, C. Y., and my two delightful "nearly grown" children, Brian and Lori -- the best cheering squad in the world -- my love to you is backed by a promise to be a better wife and mother.

And finally, but most importantly, I give "thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever" (Psalm 136:1).

ABSTRACT

The challenge of ethnic diversity is one of the most critical issues facing higher education today. With proliferating numbers of Asian Americans enrolling in colleges and universities, higher education must more effectively address the needs of this group. The common misconception that Asian Americans are problem-free and the extant research suggesting otherwise give rise to the urgency of more research to better understand this group. This need is particularly salient for Asian-American students, whose academic achievement have been oversimplified and whose mental health problems have been largely unrecognized and, consequently, unmet.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of one particular subgroup -- second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates as they are confronted with self- and perceived parental educational and career expectations. Framing this investigation were the following research questions: (1) What are the educational and career expectations of the student? (2) What are the perceived parental expectations, and how do these perceived expectations relate to the variables of birth order and gender? (3) If the student perceives differing self- and parental expectations, how do the differences relate to differing self- and perceived parental ethnic identity and acculturation? (4) What are the effects of the perceived differing expectations upon the student, and how does the student manage these perceived differing expectations?

Using grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), individual interviews were conducted with a sample of 30 students at a highly selective, research and doctorate-granting university on the West Coast of the United States. The findings revealed consistently high self- and parental educational and career expectations. A predictable

pattern of parental pressure for educational achievement was found. This investigation further revealed definitive parental wishes regarding the selection of academic majors and careers. The findings suggest a relationship between birth order and parental expectations, with higher and more definitive parental expectations experienced by firstborns than laterborns. In terms of gender and parental expectations, achievement-oriented expectations were equally high for both firstborn males and females, but gender-role behavior-orientated expectations remained distinctly bifurcated.

In the event of differing expectations, the effects upon the student could be traced to a three-stage sequential process, resulting in a cyclic pattern of effort to eliminate the difference until a break was effected through an identified set of six intervening factors. Management of differing expectations involved the student's use of one or more strategies from a repertoire of eight strategies, which, although not always effective, nevertheless were reported to be satisfactory to the student. Due to the homogeneity of the sample, no relationship was found between ethnic identity and acculturation and differing expectations.

The students' capabilities reflected intellectual and emotional resources which appeared to be serving them well. Moreover, their flexibility to accommodate multiple expectations from multiple sources, and their ability to be situation-appropriate in terms of operationalizing cultural values contributed to the success with which they negotiated this period of their lives. LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton's (1993) bicultural competence model and Bennett's (1993) intercultural development model provide an explanatory theoretical basis of the students' high level of functioning in both cultures.

This study informs higher education of some of the salient impingements upon second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates as they attempt to manage internal and external educational and career expectations at this critical juncture in their lives.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Hidden beneath the veneer of success are the psychological scars young Asian Americans endure as they struggle to meet the high expectations pressed upon them and at the same time try to deal with the pressures of entering adulthood (Ng, 1991, p. 15).

Of all the ethnic minorities in the United States, Asian Americans constitute the fastest growing group -- from slightly over 435,000 in 1970 to nearly 7 million in 1993 (U.S. Bureau of the Census). It is anticipated that by the year 2000, Asian Americans will exceed 10 million, approximately four percent of the general population.

This proliferating group presents a challenge to higher education, not because of glaring problems but because of the seeming absence of problems. As a group, Asian Americans are better educated than any other group, including Caucasians, in the United States, and their representation in higher education in terms of enrollment, retention, and graduation rates is disproportionately high in comparison to their presence in the general population (*Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, September 1, 1995). Yet it is this cohort whose needs have largely been ignored by higher education, not by design but by mere misconception -- a misconception that this group is largely problem-free.

Background to the Study

The dazzling achievements of Asian Americans have been widely acclaimed by both popular press and professional literature over the past 25 years. In the late 1960s, Asian Americans were featured in the media as model minorities because of high family income, educational attainment, and low rates of social deviance.

Until recently, to even suggest that serious education problems exist for Asian-Pacific Americans would have seemed to border on the absurd to many people, especially educators. Asian-Pacific American students almost universally have been viewed as industrious, conscientious, and well-behaved high achievers, whose educational attainments . . . have been widely acclaimed (Suzuki, 1983, p. 7).

However, behind this screen of success lies a host of problems relevant to higher education. One problem receiving greater recognition currently is the potential emotional cost of high achievement. A number of factors contributing to the emotional distress of these students has been postulated, including delayed resolution of normal developmental issues (Chen & Yang, 1986; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1996; Tsuneyoshi, 1990), high familial expectations, pressure to live up to the model minority stereotype, culture conflict (Tanaguchi, 1989/1990), and racism (Chan & Wang, 1991; Sue & Zane, 1985; Tanaguchi, 1989/1990; Toupin & Son, 1991). Recent findings suggest that although Asian Americans may be at higher risk for mental health problems than their Caucasian counterparts, they have underutilized mental health services (Gim, Atkinson, & Whiteley, 1990; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1996; Sue, 1992). Additionally, mental health problems may go unrecognized by clinicians (Abe & Zane, 1990; Cheng, Leong, & Geist, 1993; Toupin & Son, 1991).

Another possible problem behind the screen of success is culture conflict. Asian-American adolescents, besides facing adolescent developmental issues, may additionally have to cope with culture conflict. Perhaps nowhere is this clash of two divergent cultures more sharply noted than in the fundamental differences between the Chinese and American cultures. Four thousand years of Chinese collectivistic culture with its Confucian emphasis on humility, harmonious relationships, family loyalty, and devotion to tradition stand in stark contrast to the individualistic American culture upholding independence, autonomy, and personal freedom (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

To achieve academic success in American society requires assertiveness, independence, and creativity, which directly collide with Chinese values of obedience and deference to authority (Sue & Sue, 1972; Tanaguchi, 1989/1990). Yet the Chinese have traditionally upheld scholarship as crucially important for personal development. An added pressure for educational attainment for Chinese in the United States is that education is viewed as the key, and only key, to upward mobility in a society perceived to have social and occupational limitations due to racism (Chan & Wang, 1991; Sue and Okazaki, 1990). This, then, increases the relative value or function of education, a phenomenon Sue and Okazaki (1990) term "relative functionalism." Thus, any obstacles in the process of educational attainment, including culture conflict, become doubly troublesome for the Chinese-American student.

A third problem behind the screen of success salient to this study is the model minority stereotype with its concomitant high level of expectations for academic and career achievement. Multiple sources of such high expectations may include parents, teachers, ethnic community, and society in general. The literature suggests that students may have difficulty living up to the model minority image, the results of which may negatively impact the students to the point of psychological consequences (Choi, Bempechat, & Ginsburg, 1994; Kao, 1995; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Tanaguchi, 1989/1990).

Extant research suggests that educational aspirations of Asian-American parents for their elementary and high school children are higher than those of non-Asian parents (Hess, Chih-Mei, & McDevitt, 1987; Kao, 1995; Peng & Wright, 1994; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Yao, 1985), and that self-expectations of Asian-American students are also higher than that of their counterparts (Schneider & Lee, 1990; Tanaguchi, 1989/1990). However,

no investigation regarding the effects of differing self- and parental expectations nor strategies for resultant conflict mediation has been reported in literature. Furthermore, psychologists have advanced the possibility that conflict resolution in Asian cultures relies on various forms of secondary control, in which the individual *accommodates* to existing realities, rather than primary control, in which he/she gains control by *influencing* existing realities (Azuma, 1984; Kojima, 1984). Again no research regarding this phenomenon has been found.

Finally, most of the research on Asian Americans treat them as a monolithic group, and relatively little research has been done with Chinese Americans. Yet this subgroup, numbering 1,645,472 in 1990, is the the oldest and largest of all the Asian-American groups in the United States (Suzuki, 1993, p. 262). And it is a segment of this population that was the focus of this study.

Statement of the Problem

With literature suggesting that Asian parents hold high expectations for their children and that the children themselves are high achievers (Fejgin, 1995; Kao, 1995; Schneider & Lee, 1990), the present study sought to explore the experience of Chinese-American undergraduates as they attempt to navigate a critical juncture in their lives -- critical for a number of reasons. First of all, in transition from adolescence to adulthood, these students are at a developmentally vulnerable point in their lives as they grapple with issues of identity formation (Erikson, 1968). With the added factor of ethnicity, they may experience additional challenges in identity achievement. Concomitantly, these adolescents are confronted with major life decisions, among which are educational and career expectations. Family expectations and pressures of having to fulfill the model minority

stereotype as well as social and interpersonal issues heighten the normal turbulence of adolescent and post-adolescent years. Compounding these decisions may be bicultural issues creating, within the students, dialectical tensions which may render them vulnerable to negative effects of possibly variant expectations.

Specifically, the problem of this study focused upon (1) the educational and career expectations of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates, (2) the expectations that they perceive their parents to hold for them, (3) the effects of perceived differing expectations upon the students, and (4) the management of those perceived differences.

Research Questions

Based upon the exploratory nature of this investigation, the primary research question of this study was "What is the experience of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates as they are confronted with personal and perceived parental expectations for achievement in American higher education?" Subsumed under this question were the following secondary research questions:

1. What are the educational and career expectations of the student?
2. What are the perceived parental expectations, and how do these perceived expectations relate to the variables of birth order and gender?
3. If the student perceives differing self- and parental expectations, how do the differences relate to differing self- and perceived parental ethnic identity and acculturation?
4. What are the effects of the perceived differing expectations upon the student, and how does the student deal with these perceived differing expectations?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory investigation was to contribute to the scant body of knowledge regarding Chinese-Americans in the higher education arena as they deal with academic and career expectations. Through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, this study opens a window into the world of these students, allowing others, especially those in higher education, to vicariously enter this world through the students' shared experiences and discover how the students confront issues of personal aspirations versus parental expectancies and internal desires versus external directives.

Significance of the Study

In view of the unprecedented interest among educators regarding factors contributing to academic achievement of Chinese-American students and the concern of mental health professionals regarding the emotional health of those students experiencing pressure to achieve, this study has the potential to contribute to the understanding of the experience of Chinese-American undergraduates in the larger arena of American higher education, particularly the role of self- and perceived parental educational and career expectations as the students attempt to navigate and make meaning of this experience.

Extant research pertaining to this topic is limited. Moreover, limitations of some of the related research, such as small sample size, lack of attention to Asian between-group and within-group differences, and lack of systematic examination of the structure, function, and variety of Asian-American families, raise questions regarding interpretability of the results (Uba, 1994). Other fundamental research issues include the frequent lack of ecological and contextual considerations, conceptual and instrument inequivalence, and sampling, measurement, and other design considerations (Okazaki & Sue, 1995; Sasao &

Sue, 1993; Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1990; Slaughter-Defoe, Nakagawa, Takanishi, & Johnson, 1990).

To gain insight into issues of Asian-American student experience in higher education, more in-depth qualitative studies are needed (Suzuki, 1994). Okazaki and Sue (1995) further observe that "although largescale [*sic*] surveys are necessary in order to obtain some normative information on ethnic minorities, the field is ripe for a contribution in microlevel as well" (p. 372).

Despite the literature affirming the importance of parental expectations in children's achievements, *how* the children adapt to those expectations has not been adequately investigated (Slaughter-Defoe, et. al., 1990). Furthermore, notwithstanding the risk of contributing to the "model minority" stereotype, further investigation is needed to identify factors that protect the individual from experiencing psychological distress in the face of high expectations (Sue, Nakamura, Chung, & Yee-Bradbury, 1994).

Because the experience of Chinese-Americans in higher education is largely undocumented and because there is a dearth of theoretical and empirical bases for the research problem, this exploratory study has potential, through the students' shared experiences, for contributing to an enriched understanding of a critical aspect of their higher education -- expectations for achievement.

Research Methods, Procedures, and Analysis

Based upon the research focus and the research questions generated thereby, a qualitative study, primarily using grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), was deemed to most appropriately address these questions. A literature review was made (1) prior to the study to determine areas of research need, (2) during the study to provide a

secondary source of data for comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and (3) after the study to supplement validation for the findings.

Consistent with the purpose of qualitative research, that is, to form a unique interpretation of phenomena without concern about generalizing findings (Merriam, 1988), a purposeful rather than a random sample was obtained. The sample consisted of 30 Chinese-American undergraduates at a highly selective, research and doctorate-granting university on the West Coast of the United States. Comprised of 20 females and 10 males, the participants ranged in age from 18 to 21. Participation was voluntary and inclusion criteria included that the subjects be (1) single, (2) second-generation, and (3) between the ages of 18 and 24 years of age. The sample was obtained through recruitment from classes and campus organizations. Prior to the interviews, each participant signed the Informed Consent and Disclosure form (Appendix I)

Through the use of semi-structured, 45-minute audio-recorded individual interviews, data were obtained. The interviews were guided by an Interview Protocol (Appendix A). However, to facilitate development of rapport and free flow of exchange, the researcher did not rigidly adhere to the sequence of the Interview Protocol but rather sought to maintain a fluidity which would permit indepth discussion. Furthermore, strict adherence to the Interview Protocol would constrict the spontaneity and range of responses, thereby foreclosing data and severely impacting the findings. Each interview was transcribed verbatim, after which five copies were made.

Based upon the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the primary method of data analysis was the constant comparative procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 1990); additionally, nonparametric statistical analyses were performed. With the constant comparative procedure, comparisons were made of datum to datum, incident to incident,

category to category, and within and across interviews, as well as cross-comparisons of the above. Concepts were compared against one another, and similar ones that appeared to pertain to a specific phenomenon were grouped together into categories and labeled. As categories were linked together, they at times were found to be subcategories which were then subsumed under a larger category in a set of relationships. As those relationships were then linked to others, a network of relationships emerged which then formed the basis of integration and synthesis, resulting in a portrait of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates navigating their educational journey as they confront self- and perceived parental academic and career expectations.

Delimitations of the Study

This investigation sought only to examine a small segment of a larger research problem. Such issues as cultural determinants in high parental expectations and ethnicity as a mediating variable in ego-identity development were acknowledged, but specific treatment of these issues were outside the scope of this research. Furthermore, this study was delimited to a select population in a specific setting: second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates at a highly selective university who met inclusion criteria and who participated in an interview with the researcher. The study also was delimited to students' perception of parental expectations, as opposed to actual self-reported expectations of the parents. Inasmuch as an individual operates on perceptions of reality, which is reality for that individual, it was the students' perceptions of expectations that were salient to this study. Although expectations from other sources, such as other grandparents, siblings, peers, teachers, and community were acknowledged, they were not directly addressed as they were outside the scope of this investigation.

Limitations of the Study

Potential weaknesses of this study included a methodological concern regarding the use of the interview format. The following five issues are herein addressed:

1. Cultural deference to authority may inhibit free and open responses.
2. The desire to "save face" may lead to more positive than honest responses.
3. Accurate articulation of thoughts and feelings may be difficult.
4. Sharing thoughts and feelings of a personal nature with a stranger may be considered inappropriate.
5. Researcher bias may affect the analysis and interpretation of data.

The first four factors noted above can be subsumed under the rubric of response bias. To facilitate mitigation of response bias, the researcher used the Interview Protocol only as a guide and did not necessarily engage in strict adherence to its format and order. To facilitate more productive and accurate interviewee response necessitated use of interviewing techniques with sensitivity and skill and the artful framing of questions so that a psychologically safe, comfortable, and accepting milieu would be experienced by the interviewee.

The fifth factor noted above, researcher bias, is a ubiquitous concern whenever researcher-conducted interviews and researcher-generated analysis of qualitative data are used. Although it is impossible to shed one's values and biases, it *is* possible and critical to acknowledge one's values and biases and to consciously hold them in abeyance as much as possible and to enter the research arena as an open-minded learner, ready to share in the experience of the interviewee. Miles and Huberman (1994) address this issue of bias by underscoring the importance of analytic honesty. They further issue a caveat of the

dangerous position of the qualitative researcher as a one-person entity who collects and analyzes data and subsequently arrives at conclusions in the absence of canons, decision rules, algorithms, or other safeguards of validity. These issues were addressed through specific measures such as audio recording of the interviews, note taking, memoing, and constructing provisional data displays, as well as through the process of triangulation, particularly data source, theory, and methodological triangulation.

Assumptions of the Study

Several assumptions were inherent in this study, one of which relates to the Asian cultural construal of interdependence. Markus and Kitayama (1991) submit that the epitome of this interdependence manifests itself in that the person's ultimate goal in life is meeting the expectations of significant others. This investigation assumed, first of all, that these Chinese-American students have been influenced by Chinese cultural values, and secondly, that interdependence and, hence, parental expectancies constitute a driving force in their academic and career aspirations.

Other research assumptions include honesty of responses by the participants in the interviews and the sufficiency of a 45-minute interview session to obtain desired data.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

1. Asian American. An individual residing in the United States whose ancestral origins are from an Asian country or Pacific Island as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.
2. Second-generation Chinese American. A Chinese born in the United States or

Canada of parents, one or both of whom immigrated here from East Asia. Even if one parent was born in the United States or Canada, and the other in East Asia, the child still holds second-generation status.

3. Culture. Patterned ways of thinking, feeling, reacting, and valuing that are distinctive of a particular society.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters followed by the References and Appendices. As an introduction to the study, Chapter 1 presents the background of the problem, statement of problem, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research methods and procedure, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, assumptions of the study, definition of terms, and organization of the study. The following chapter, Chapter II, contains a contextual backdrop to the study, a historical perspective on research of Asian-Americans in higher education, and a review of literature relevant to academic and career expectations of Asian-American students. Chapter III describes the research design, method and procedure of data collection and analysis used in this investigation, followed by Chapter IV, which presents the findings of the study. The final chapter, Chapter V, provides a comparison of the findings against the backdrop of the literature, depiction of an emerging portrait of this sample, a discussion of alternate theoretical perspectives to explain the findings, along with implications of the study and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates as they deal with self- and perceived parental expectations for achievement in American higher education. Subsumed under the rubric of this broad research focus were the following specific research questions:

1. What are the educational and career expectations of the student?
2. What are the perceived parental expectations, and how do these perceived expectations relate to the variables of birth order and gender?
3. If the student perceives differing self- and parental expectations, how do the differences relate to differing self- and perceived parental ethnic identity and acculturation?
4. What are the effects of the perceived differing expectations upon the student, and how does the student deal with these perceived differing expectations?

A literature search regarding the broad research focus was conducted prior to framing of the research questions. Upon crystallizing the research questions, the researcher conducted a more exhaustive literature review after which a contextual backdrop based upon literature findings was selected.

This chapter commences with a discussion of the contextual backdrop to this study, followed by (1) a historical perspective of research on Asian-Americans in higher education, (2) an overview of relevant literature relevant to Asian-American academic and career expectations, and (3) a summary of the literature findings.

Contextual Backdrop of the Research

Based upon the literature review and the research questions, the researcher was convinced of the essential need to provide a contextual backdrop against which the research problem could be understood. Because culture is basic to how individuals perceive, understand, and make meaning of themselves, others, and the world, a contextual backdrop was selected at the inception of the project, which, at that time was deemed the most appropriate -- the individualism-collectivism model (Hofstede, 1980). However, at the culmination of the project, the original contextual backdrop with its unidimensional conceptualization of culture was found to be inadequate, and alternative theoretical perspectives, which are discussed in Chapter V, were considered to be more appropriate in explaining the research results. Nevertheless, a cursory overview of the original perspective is herein presented.

Individualism-Collectivism Model

Widely accepted and extensively used by cross-cultural researchers in classifying various cultures is the bipolar model of individualism-collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; Hui & Triandis, 1986). At one end of the continuum is the construct of individualism, which is based upon the premise that the individual is the basic unit of survival. Standing in stark contrast at the other end is collectivism, which holds as its premise the group as the basic unit. Individualism is at the heart of Western cultures, whereas collectivism is inherent in most non-Western cultures of the world.

Compatible with the constructs of individualism and collectivism are the independent-interdependent construals of the "self" which Markus and Kitayama (1991) advance as crucial in influencing and even determining the nature of individual experience. Within individualistic societies, the self is construed to be an autonomous entity, striving

toward self-expression, self-reliance, self-actualization, and "finding oneself," with individual goals taking precedence over the group goals (Triandis, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

In collectivistic cultures, by contrast, distinction is generally not made between personal and group goals, or if a distinction is made, personal goals are subordinate to collective goals. Because the socialization process emphasizes conformity, obedience, filial piety, restraint of emotional expression, and a sense of obligation, expectations of significant others become exceedingly important. The "self" becomes *self-in-relation-to-others* (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Indeed, the "I" perspective is inhibited and processing takes place from "other" perspective, with continuous role taking and reciprocal interactions for the purpose of satisfying the wishes of "other." Furthermore, when the needs, goals, and desires of "other" are at variance with one's own, meeting those of the other person "will be a necessary requirement" for satisfying one's own (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Thus, the experience and expression of emotion, expectations, and obligations become embedded in this context.

Such a collectivistic orientation coupled with external expectations for achievement, and with concomitant constraints for any modifications based upon one's own perceived needs, may render the individual in an individualistic culture vulnerable to psychological distress (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Sue & Morishima, 1982).

Relevance to the Study

Negotiating two cultures may indeed be stressful, and the conflict ensuing from expectations from two divergent cultures may be intense, particularly for the second-generation individual, who has been socialized in a collectivistic family culture and ethnic community but is now expected to succeed in an individualistic society. Compounding the

issue may be high expectations stemming not only from the family but also from the ethnic community. In fact, more than just family honor can be at stake; the fear of "losing face" and letting the entire ethnic community down may be terrifying indeed (Hsia, 1988).

Addressing conflicting expectations between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, a second-generation Chinese male undergraduate in Wu's (1984) study described a rather untenable position: "Here in school I am constantly told that I am working for myself, my own betterment, so I should remain true to what I want. At home, I am being educated for the good of my family, for the betterment of my younger siblings, so I should remain true to what the family and larger needs and wants are" (p. 113). Likewise, it may be that conflicting expectations are also creating a dilemma for second-generation Chinese-American students, the transitional generation; and their attempts to negotiate conflicting cultural expectations may render them vulnerable to negative effects of variant expectations.

Historical Perspective of Research on Asian Americans in Higher Education

Before the 1960s, research on Asian Americans in higher education was largely nonexistent (Suzuki, 1994). Beginning in the 1960s, fueled by the popular press's portrayal of the successful Asian American, interest surged regarding the educational achievement of Asian Americans. Paralleling this interest has been research investigating the reasons for their attainment. The early literature focused primarily upon the positive stereotypical characteristics of Asian Americans as contributing to high academic achievement. This was followed in the 1970s by a hiatus and then a resurgence of interest gaining momentum to the present, with greater attention to ethnic identity, acculturation, personality characteristics, and psychological distress. Most of the studies have consisted of cross-cultural comparisons between Asian Americans as a group and Caucasians, or, to

a lesser degree, of comparisons among various Asian-American subgroups. In many such studies, critical variables in the sample were ignored, such as generational differences (first, second, and third/later generations), family structure types (single parent, intergenerational, and multi-families), and between-group differences of Asian Americans. Moreover, little research has been conducted on lower-achieving Asian Americans (Slaughter-Defoe, et al., 1990).

Extant Research

Educational Achievement of Asian Americans

The value of education in most Asian cultures in general and in the Chinese culture in particular is well documented. The importance of education stems from traditional high regard for scholarship, which has been manifested in the United States higher education arena by representation of Asian students disproportionate to their presence in the general population. Not only are they over-represented in general enrollment figures, but also in scholastic rankings (Peng & Wright, 1994).

Curiosity as to the factors contributing to the educational achievement of Asian Americans is revealed in the burgeoning interest among researchers. In an attempt to discover and account for these factors, several explanatory arguments have been advanced. These arguments are treated in the following section.

Explanatory Arguments for High Educational Expectations. The most common explanatory argument in the research literature for high educational expectations among Asian-American families is the high cultural regard of scholarship (Hess et al., 1987; Hirschman & Wong, 1986; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; Sue & Morishima, 1982).

Additionally, the power of external expectations has been explained in terms of the

collectivistic culture context. Empirical studies with Chinese reveal that it is the family or other in-group which sets the standards, evaluates the individual's performance, and determines outcomes (Yu & Yang, 1994). With cultural values embodying the virtues of filial piety, obedience, and group harmony, fulfilling expectations of the group becomes *modus operandus*. Studies suggest that cultural values and parental practices promoting educational achievement are so deeply entrenched that the values and practices remain viable regardless of external influences such as political changes or relocation to another country (Lin & Fu, 1990). Yet despite the wide-spread acceptance of the role of culture in Asian-American educational expectations, criticism has been wielded against the sole focus on cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes to the exclusion of a more cultural/ecological perspective, including such crucial factors as socioeconomic status, family structure, neighborhood, and community factors (Slaughter-Defoe, et al., 1990).

In addition to the cultural perspective, two other perspectives have also been used to explain this phenomenon, namely, the generational perspective and the relative functionalism model. The generational perspective proposes that educational achievement levels, among other variables, can be generationally linked (Chen, 1996). First-generation parents struggle for economic survival in a foreign country; and by infusing their dreams in their children and sacrificing to make those dreams a reality, these parents communicate to their offspring high expectations for success. Thus these expectations are passed on to the second generation who, immersed in cultural values and norms at home, accept the legacy of high aspirations.

Using the data from the base-year and first follow-up of The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), Chen (1996) found that it was the second-generation Asian-American students who not only evidenced the most educational gain but

who also outperformed all other ethnic groups. First-generation Asian Americans performed near the same level as Caucasians, whereas the third generation lagged behind. The longer immigrants remained in a host culture, the greater the similarities in attitudes, habits, and norms, including educational goals (Chen, 1996; Kitano, 1969; Steinberg, 1996; Volet and Renshaw, 1995).

It was also the families of second-generation Asian-American students who were found to be the most highly educated and the most supportive of education. Parents of second-generation Asian Americans averaged over 16 years of formal education, nearly one-and-a-half years more than parents of first generation and approximately two years more than parents of third-generation Asian Americans and Caucasians (Chen, 1996).

Taking a polemic position to the above findings regarding the decrease in educational achievement after the second generation, Hirschman and Wong (1986) argue that because parents are likely to encourage education in their children, the high levels of Asian-American attainment may "well continue even after other aspects of Asian-American culture are losing their distinctiveness" (p. 24).

Linked to the generational perspective but with a divergent philosophical base is the relative functionalism model (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). Arguing that culture alone is inadequate in explaining high academic achievement of Asian Americans, Sue and Okazaki (1990) contend that in situations of restricted upward mobility through other avenues, education is perceived as a viable means, particularly in view of research suggesting that Asian-American students tend to believe that what is studied in school is related to success in life (Ritter & Dornbusch, 1987).

Expectations for Educational Achievement

In an attempt to determine contributing factors of Asian-American achievement, researchers have been intrigued by the possible role of early academic socialization; thus most of the research has focused upon the experience of elementary school children, particularly within the context of the family.

The Role of Family in Educational Expectations. The role of family, especially parental influence, in setting high educational expectations is undisputed (Campbell & Mandel, 1990; Chao, 1996; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; Pang, 1991; Peng & Wright, 1994; Schneider & Lee, 1990). Supporting the importance of academic socialization, Stevenson, Lee, and Stigler's (1986) segment of a seminal cross-national longitudinal research study found that even in first grade, children in Japan and Taiwan surpass their American counterparts in math achievement, the differences of which increased with grade levels; the authors argue that such differences cannot be attributed to differences in cognitive abilities but rather to home and school experiences.

The research literature is consistent in suggesting that parental expectations for and involvement in their children's academic pursuits play a critical role in performance outcomes (Au & Harackiewicz, 1986; Chao, 1996; Chen & Uttal, 1988; Choi et al., 1994; Kao, 1995; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Sollenberger, 1968; Yao, 1985). Data from the base-year survey of NELS:88 reveal that among all variables, educational expectations of Asian parents for their children had the highest correlation with academic achievement (.47). It was further found that Asian-American parents held the highest educational expectations of all groups (including Caucasian) -- 16.7 years of education for their children (Peng & Wright, 1994). In contrast to other ethnic groups, Asian-Americans' academic expectations and performance have not been found to correlate

with socioeconomic status (Fejgin, 1995; Sollenberger, 1968).

Also from the NELS:88 data, Chen (1996) extrapolated some intriguing differences in parental expectations based upon generational status. Nearly 96 percent of the parents of the second-generation Asian Americans expect them to pursue graduate education, whereas the figure dropped to 73.7 percent of parents of the third generation, which is even lower than the 78 percent of Caucasian parents.

That Asian mothers are less satisfied than non-Asian mothers with their children's academic performance receives broad empirical support (Chen and Uttal, 1988; Hess et al., 1987; Holloway, Kashiwagi, Hess, & Azuma, 1986; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Stevenson & Lee, 1990). Stevenson and associates (Stevenson, 1992) launched their investigation on the academic achievement of children in Japan, Taiwan, the United States, and, later, China. Findings from subsequent segments in this study remain robust, most notably the response constancy of Chinese and Japanese parents as they continued to hold much higher expectations for, and concomitantly less favorable evaluations of, their children's academic performance than did their U. S. counterparts. The children's perception of their parents' level of satisfaction corroborated with the parents' reported level -- that they were not satisfied with their children's performance and would be satisfied only if improvement continued (Chen et al., 1996; Lee, Ichikawa, & Stevenson, 1987).

Serving as a driving force in the Chinese parents' high expectations for academic performance was found to be the Chinese philosophy of human malleability and the value of self-improvement (Chen and Uttal, 1988). Not surprising, then, is the cultural emphasis on diligence and effort as causal attributions for achievement and success.

According to the causal attribution model (Weiner, 1979), individuals search for explanations for success and failure. These causal attributions have been categorized as

ability, effort, difficulty of the task, and luck. Numerous studies regarding attributions of success and failure consistently reveal that Asians attribute success to effort, as contrasted to Caucasians who contribute success and failure to ability (Chiu, 1988; Hess et al., 1987; Holloway et al., 1986; Lee et al., 1987; Mizokawa & Ryckman, 1990; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; Ng, Walkey, & Hunt, 1995; Whang & Hancock, 1994; Yan & Gaier, 1994). In fact, findings from Lee and associates' (1987) study suggest that the more strongly Chinese and Japanese mothers believed in effort for success, the higher were their children's math achievement scores. Hess and associates (1987) found that in case of failure, unlike the Caucasians and the Chinese-Americans, who attempted to determine the cause, the typical response of the mothers in China toward the children was anger and punishment or admonition to work harder. In the event of high performance, the Chinese mothers tended to raise the standard even higher -- "that's nothing to be proud about. With your ability, you should get 100 every time. If you don't, it is because you are careless" (p. 185). This type of response also found support in other studies of Asian Americans (Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992).

Because Asian children are socialized early with high expectations for academic achievement (Chao, 1996; Choi, et al., 1994; Kao, 1995; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Sollenberger, 1968; Yao, 1985), by the time these children enter college, the critical juncture of confronting major educational and career decisions, they may be struggling with pressures of high, and possibly variant, expectations.

Self- and Perceived Parental Educational Expectations of College Students

Although a paucity of research literature exists on the self- and perceived parental expectations of college students, the empirical studies that have been reported suggest that Asian-American college students experience pressure to succeed academically because of

high expectations from within themselves and from others (Hsia, 1988; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; Tanaguchi, 1989/1990; Toupin & Son, 1991).

The findings of Mordkowitz and Ginsburg's study (1986) of Asian Americans revealed a uniformity of perceived parental commitment to education. Education was so prioritized that household chores and contributing to economic livelihood were deemed unnecessary. One respondent remarked, "Studying could get you out of 99 percent of anything" (p. 10). Concomitant with active parental support was the inculcation of a sense of obligation for achievement. Guilt about parental sacrifice and "letting parents down" when not meeting their expectations seemed to be an effective motivating instrument. An A- would often be met with demand that the child could do better, and comparison of the child's performance with that of others was a pervasively reported motivating technique.

Tanaguchi's (1989/1990) study of Chinese-Americans, Japanese-Americans, and Caucasian-Americans found a disparity in the students' beliefs regarding success. For the Caucasians, it was "finding oneself," but for the Asian Americans, success was viewed as doing one's best, and failure as not doing as much as one could. The study further suggests that the Asian Americans' sense of both success and failure were linked to others' expectations of them.

Lew's investigation (1994) lends additional support to this collectivistic orientation to achievement among Asian Americans. Her findings revealed a significant predictive association between acculturation and achievement motivation orientation. Those who endorsed Asian values tended to have a collectivistic orientation to achievement, whereas students endorsing both Asian and Western values tended to have an individualistic orientation to achievement. The findings further suggest that a collectivistic orientation is related to success conflicts (desire for yet fear of success), but an individualistic orientation

seemed to buffer against such conflicts. No significant gender differences were found.

Effects of High Expectations upon the Student

The popular press, most notably during the 1960s and 1970s, pointed to the phenomenal academic achievement of Asian Americans. The ensuing model minority stereotype of this group continues to reinforce the belief that cultural values emphasizing the importance of education and subsequent high expectations inevitably result in high achievement. Notwithstanding this widely held belief, the question remains, "What are the effects of high expectations?" The vacuity in literature regarding the effects of high expectations upon students is glaring, yet this issue begs treatment in view of the possibility of model minority stereotype camouflaging underlying problems.

High Expectations and High Achievement. In terms of immediate, visible effects of high parental expectations upon the student, the literature points to academic diligence and high student achievement (Campbell & Mandel, 1987; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; National Center for Education Statistics, 1993; Pang, 1991; Peng & Wright, 1994; Schneider & Lee, 1990). Such effects of high parental expectations are found even among elementary school children as suggested by Au and Harackiewicz's (1986) study on the effects of perceived parental expectations on Chinese children's math performance. The study revealed that high parental expectations enhanced performance of children anticipating parental evaluation of their performance. Conversely, perceived low expectations negatively impacted performance when children anticipated parental evaluation.

That Asian-American students spend more time than other groups on homework is well documented (Freeman & Morss, 1993; Peng & Wright, 1994). Data on high school students compiled by the American College Testing Program reveal that Asian high school

students not only spend more time on homework, but also earn more credits, take more high-level math and science courses, have higher GPAs, and score the highest of any group on ACT and SAT math sections (American College Testing Program cited in the *Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, September 1, 1995; National Center for Education Statistics, 1996). Consequently, twice as many Asians as compared to Caucasians aspire to higher education, resulting with Asians holding a disproportionately greater share of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees in comparison to other racial or ethnic groups (Hsia, 1988; Suzuki, 1994; Wagner, 1992).

The motivation to succeed under the banner of high expectations is not clear. There appears to be support for achievement motivation arising from fear and guilt (Lew, 1994) as well as motivation stemming from desire to please parents (Pang, 1991; Schneider & Lee, 1990). Pang's investigation (1991) of the relationship of test anxiety and math achievement to parental values revealed that Asian students experienced more test anxiety than their Caucasian counterparts; the former were also more desirous of parental approval; and the Asian-American males felt the greatest amount of parental pressure, all of which may place Asian Americans at risk for emotional and academic problems.

High Expectations and Psychological Effects. The research literature on the psychological effects of high expectations upon the students reveal conflicting findings.

A segment (Crystal, et al., 1994) of Stevenson and associates' cross-national study investigated psychological maladjustment of 11th graders and its relationship to academic achievement, parental expectations, and parental satisfaction. The findings dispute the widely-held assumption that Taiwanese and Japanese are more stressed than their American counterparts. It was the Americans who reported more frequent feelings of stress, anxiety, and aggression. However, it was the Chinese who reported the most frequent depressed

moods, the sources of which were identified as school, followed by peer and family relations. For the Americans and Japanese, it was peer relationships that evoked the most depression.

In two U.S. studies, one of high school students and the other of college students, depression was found in those perceiving failure in fulfilling the model minority stereotype (Chen, 1995; Lee, 1994). Moreover, Lee (1994) found that Korean- and Asian-identified high school students, as contrasted by those designating themselves as Chinese, Japanese, or Vietnamese, were motivated academically, to a greater degree, by a sense of guilt and responsibility to their families.

An investigation by Rosenthal and Feldman (1996) found Chinese-American adolescents to have markedly less misconduct, but more distress than their Western classmates. The authors' conjecture is that because Chinese-American youth are less likely to act out their distress, their feelings are turned inward, resulting in psychological distress. Their findings also suggest that second-generation Chinese-American adolescents have significantly later expectations for autonomy while other studies indicate that due to cultural values, Asian Americans in general tend to be less autonomous and more obedient to authority figures (Leung, 1988; Tsuneyoshi, 1990).

On the other hand, studies with Asian-American undergraduates suggest that cultural expectations for achievement may exact emotional costs (Leong, 1986; Marsella, Kinzie, & Gordon, 1973; Sue & Morishima, 1982; Sue & Zane, 1985; Toupin & Son, 1993). Furthermore, a number of studies support the contention that Asian Americans experience greater socioemotional problems than do Caucasians (Cheng, et al., 1993; Leong, 1986; Okazaki, 1994).

The students' inability to meet expectations resulting in a discrepancy between

“real” and “ideal” self-concepts was found to relate to depression among Caucasians and Chinese-Americans but not Japanese-Americans (Marsella et al., 1973). Okazaki's (1994) study further suggests that not only did Asian-American students have higher levels of depression but also higher levels of social avoidance and fear of negative appraisals, as compared to Caucasians.

Although most studies involve Asian Americans as a group, Sue and Kirk's (1972) study found that American-born Chinese college freshmen have greater socioemotional adjustment problems as compared to non-Chinese freshmen, and a later study (Sue & Zane, 1985) found that immigrant Chinese have greater problems than American-born Chinese. Other studies suggests more emotional problems among Asian-American students than among non-Asian students (Leong, 1986). According to the findings of Zane et al. (1991), Asians tend to be more anxious and guilt-ridden than Caucasians. Ng (1991) attributes the increasing suicide rates of Asian-American youth to be related to being placed in the untenable position of having to meet high expectations and deal with the pressures of entering adulthood.

Toupin and Son's study (1991) countered other studies in its findings that Asian Americans, in comparison to non-Asians, had lower mean SAT scores in math and verbal, had lower GPAs, were less likely to appear on the Dean's List, and were more likely to be on academic probation, and were less likely to graduate than their counterparts. In fact, 15 Asian Americans, as compared to seven of their matches, had to withdraw after evaluation by the university counseling staff due to emotional problems severe enough to warrant a leave of absence.

Aldwin and Greenberger's study (1987) suggests that Korean undergraduates experience much more parental pressure for achievement than Caucasians, and that the

former also perceived greater disparity between parental and own standards of "doing well" in terms of GPA. The Koreans also reported significantly more depressive symptomatology, with parents' traditionalism as the variable most strongly associated with depression, even more strongly than parental expectations.

In assessing the above studies, conflicting findings are evident. Upon closer examination, the distinct bifurcation is largely reflective of the location of the sample pools: (1) those in the U.S. more distressed than those in Asian countries, and (2) those at high school and college levels more distressed than those at elementary school level.

The findings suggesting that Chinese children are less subject to distress symptoms than their American counterparts are based primarily upon the landmark cross-national longitudinal study by Stevenson and associates, in which the Chinese samples were taken from Taiwan and China (Chen and Uttal, 1988; Crystal et al., 1994; Stevenson, Chen, & Lee, 1993), as opposed to Chinese-American or Asian-American samples taken from the U.S. But this pattern changes with studies involving Chinese-American or Asian-American samples, for with these samples, the findings suggest *more* emotional distress. In interpreting one of the cross-national studies of elementary school children, Chen and Uttal (1988) caution that the contextual component of the Chinese family must be maintained; high parental expectations and low level of satisfaction are not indicative of stern parenting, but rather of a philosophy emphasizing the role of effort, which may not be considered stressful by the children.

Studies of U.S. samples also support the nurturing, monitoring, and involvement characteristics of Asian parenting as conducive to academic achievement (Chao, 1996; Lau & Cheung, 1987; Schickedanz, 1995; Sollenberger, 1968); but the question remains as to why the research literature suggests that Asian-American students experience greater

psychological distress than their non-Asian counterparts. Upon closer examination, the studies involving U.S. samples were primarily at the high school and college levels, where adolescent developmental issues may have confounded the findings. Another possible explanation is that some of the studies did not control for variables of generational status or level of acculturation.

Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

Only within recent years has there been acculturation research on Asian Americans; even so, the research literature is still scant on the relationship of ethnic identity and acculturation to educational and career expectations. In terms of achievement motivation, J. T. Wu's (1992) study found a complex relationship between ethnic identity and achievement motivation predictive of self-concept and academic expectancy. However, in another study, actual achievement was found to be correlated less to acculturation of the student and more to the education level of the parents (Ahuna, 1994).

Support has been presented for the association between acculturation and psychological well-being. Studies including generational status or level of acculturation found those factors to be associated with stress, with recent immigrants experiencing more stress (Padilla et al., 1985; Sue & Zane, 1985; Tran, Hoang, Docuyan, & Jung, 1992; Tsoi-Pullar, 1994). Undergraduates who scored higher on acculturation likewise scored higher on indices of psychological adjustment (Abe & Zane, 1990; Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992; Tran et al., 1992); but in Padilla et al.'s (1985) study, it was the second-generation Japanese-American students, as opposed to first and third/later generations, who scored lowest in self-esteem and who were found to be struggling to reconcile traditional and Western values. This study suggests positive effects on self-esteem when identification with one's own culture as well as the host culture is maintained.

Studies have also suggested a relationship between acculturation and assertiveness, indicating that those with lower acculturation to mainstream Western values and practices and higher ethnic identity or adherence to traditional Asian values and practices were less assertive than those with higher acculturation (Lin, 1994). The findings of Sodowsky, Lai, and Plake's study (1991) revealed that first-generation Asian Americans perceived significantly more prejudice, used less English, and were less acculturated than second/later generations, but no significant differences were found among second/later generations.

Association of Birth Order and Gender to Expectations

Inherent in Asian cultures is a rigid hierarchical family structure, within which ascribed gender and birth order roles and expectations are clearly delineated. Males have the responsibility to continue the family lineage and to provide for the parents in their old age. The oldest male receives a double portion of the inheritance, and upon him rests the greatest expectations for providing not only for the parents but also providing for the younger siblings. Within such a system, achievement expectations are high for males, whereas women, on the other hand, are considered only marginal members whose primary responsibility is to produce male offspring and care for family (Yang, 1991). For Chinese-American women, such traditional gender-role expectations may present a dialectical tension in the Western culture, and Asian-American women have been found to be more conflicted, with accompanying turmoil and guilt, than Asian-American males (J. Wu, 1992). Yang (1991) asserts that in the struggle to define their new identity, these women face two patriarchal societies -- the traditional family system and the work place.

Yet the research literature suggests that no gender difference exists in parental expectations for academic achievement, with expectations uniformly high for both sons and daughters (Campbell, Connolly, & Pizzo, 1986). These high expectations are realized

through impressive achievement in math and science by females as well as males. In comparison to males -- both Asian-American and Caucasian -- Campbell et al. (1986) found Asian-American females to have the highest level of computer proficiency. Asian-American females were also found to enter the field of engineering at the same rate as males (Peng, cited in Campbell & Mandel, 1990).

Sue and Zane's (1985) findings revealed no gender differences in academic grades or factors leading to their choice of majors, including parental preferences, but the findings did reveal that females scored lower than males on the SAT quantitative portion, and the former also practiced better study habits. Leung et al.'s (1994) study found that in contrast to their Caucasian counterparts as well as to Asian-American males, Asian-American females were more likely to consider nontraditional occupations for their gender.

Career Expectations of Asian Americans

A dearth of empirical literature exists on career expectations of Asian Americans. However, the clustering of Asian Americans in the fields of natural sciences and mathematics is well documented (Hsia, 1988; Leung, Ivey, & Suzuki, 1994; Smith, 1990; Sue & Kirk, 1972; Suzuki, 1983; Toupin & Son, 1991). Several hypotheses, including racism fears, personality structure, prestige, and the "glass ceiling," have been advanced for the disproportionate representation of Asian Americans in these fields. Fear of racial discrimination has been implicated for the prevalence of career selection in the medical and applied sciences, where, according to Kim & Chun (1994), greater objectivity in evaluation of performance exists than in the social sciences and humanities which are feared to be more subjective and thereby more susceptible to racial discrimination.

The personality structure hypothesis suggests that Asian Americans demonstrate low tolerance for ambiguity and a proclivity for working within a clearly delineated

structure involving concrete problem-solving styles and low levels of ambiguity (Leong, 1991; Sue & Kirk, 1972, 1973; Yang, 1991). The research literature also suggests that Asian-American students have completed a lower number of mature interpersonal relationships tasks (Tsuneyoshi, 1989), and exhibit higher levels of dependent decision-making styles and lower levels of career maturity (deference of decision-making responsibility outside of oneself) than Caucasian students (Leong, 1991; Luzzo, 1992). These findings are compatible with collectivistic culture values in which deference to group goals is expected. The findings also reveal that in comparison to Caucasians, Asian Americans place greater emphasis on financial security and job stability. Although Leung et al.'s (1994) study partially corroborates the above findings in that Asian Americans were found to be more interested in investigative (requiring logical, analytic, and non-personal activities) rather than enterprising or conventional occupations which require forceful communication and interpersonal influence, an intriguing and conflicting finding was that there no difference between the two racial groups in their interest in realistic and artistic occupations.

The prestige factor has been conjectured to be reflected in career preference. Leong and Tata (1990) found that the desire for prestige increased significantly with age, and traditional gender occupations that were initially favored were later compromised for prestige.

Another factor in career selection is the "glass ceiling" phenomenon obstructing upward mobility of Asian Americans. Studies have found that Asian Americans are not compensated by income parity with Caucasians (Barringer, Takeuchi, & Xenos, 1990; Nagasawa & Espinosa, 1992). Furthermore, according to Nagasawa and Espinosa's (1992) findings, Asian Americans do not command the same level of respect, deference, or

power as their Caucasian counterparts. In contrast, Barringer et al. (1990) found occupational prestige scores for men but not for women to be commensurate with educational levels.

With the influential role of parental expectations regarding academic achievement and with the predilection of Asian American students toward certain careers due to a variety of factors as noted above, only one study was uncovered pertaining to parental impingement upon the student's selection of a career. Okutsu's (1989) study with Asian Americans found that 80 percent of the long-term immigrants, as compared to 69 percent of the American-born and recent immigrants perceived high parental pressure to select a career with employment security, yet 77% indicated that their parents have little influence over their choice of major.

Differing Expectations and Conflict Management

No extant research pertaining to resolution of differing expectations for educational and career achievement was uncovered. With regard to conflict management, however, Yee (cited in Yan and Gaier, 1994) identified of four strategies of conflict management used by Chinese students: (1) endurance, (2) look the other way, (3) don't think too much, and (4) activity. The second strategy, "look the other way," found support in several studies which suggest that when confronted with conflict, Asian-American students are more likely than non-Asians to use conflict avoidance and withdrawal (Chang, 1994; Leung, 1988).

A study comparing Asian-American and Caucasian students revealed the former to be more pessimistic, and to use coping strategies of problem avoidance and social withdrawal more than their Caucasian counterparts (Chang, 1994). Of note, however, is

that despite their use of more disengagement types of strategies, these Asian Americans were as engaged in their efforts to cope with stressful situations as were the Caucasians. The former also reported more depressive and psychological symptoms than did the Caucasians.

In contrast to Chang's findings, noted earlier, of Chinese-Americans using problem avoidance and social withdrawal (1994), the findings of other studies suggest that commonly attributed non-assertiveness of Asian Americans is actually context-dependent non-assertiveness (Sue, et al., 1990; Zane, et al., 1991). Counselors, educators, researchers, and Asian Americans themselves may erroneously attribute non-assertiveness of Asians to personality traits rather than to specific situations. Another compounding factor is that cultural values, such as self-effacement, may be operative rather than actual skills deficits.

Azuma (1984) addresses the issue of cultural differences in conflict resolution. However, research findings may belie their interpretations. Most research on conflict resolution is based upon Western strategies of resolution. In sharp contrast to the rigid models of Western primary and secondary locus of control, the Japanese culture typifies other collectivistic cultures in which secondary control assumes numerous forms through the art of yielding (Azuma, 1984). Such yielding, rather than indicating non-assertiveness, passivity, weakness or other undesirable personality characteristics, may actually demonstrate a highly mature and effective form of control (Azuma, 1984; Kojima, 1984). Yet on the other hand, for the second-generation Chinese-American, such yielding to another's desires contradicts the values of independence, self-direction, and assertiveness epitomized in American higher education.

Because the traditional Chinese family structure provides for definitive roles for

Also well documented in the literature are the high academic and educational achievements of Asian-American students and the restricted range of career selection.

Of the studies investigating causal factors in the educational achievements of one or more of the subgroups, deeply embedded cultural values regarding the importance of education have invariably been cited. Parental expectations have been positively associated with the children's achievement, but the literature is not clear as to how the children adapt to these expectations. Even less clear are the effects of high expectations upon the children. Although popular belief undergirded by empirical investigations point to the immediate, visible results of high performance, the literature also suggests psychological costs. Moreover, in the event of differing expectations between parent and child, the effects of the differences upon the child and the resolution of such differences have not been reported in the literature.

In view of the increasing contributions of Asian-American research to the understanding of a historically under-researched group, the caveat issued earlier regarding the exercise of caution in interpreting these studies merits repetition. With over 60 subgroups represented (Nash, 1991) coupled with the recent influx of diverse Southeast Asia subgroups presenting a mixed picture of varying academic abilities, expectations, and achievements, and with critical variables of generational status and family structure often missing in the studies, findings of studies on Asian Americans as a monolithic entity must be interpreted judiciously.

Despite the cautionary note, the scant research regarding self- and parental expectations of academic and career achievement has nevertheless made a contribution to the field regarding a little known topic of a highly stereotyped group, but a definitive picture has yet to emerge. Furthermore, the disparity between the common misconception

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Despite the cautionary note, the scant research regarding self- and parental expectations of academic and career achievement has nevertheless made a contribution to the field regarding a little known topic of a highly stereotyped group, but a definitive picture has yet to emerge. Furthermore, the disparity between the common misconception

of Asian Americans as being well-adjusted and educationally successful and the available research that suggest otherwise give rise to the urgency for more research to better understand this diverse group. This need, Yee (1992) argues, is particularly salient for Asian-American students, whose academic success has been oversimplified and whose mental health problems have gone unrecognized and, consequently, largely unmet. Yee (1992) further contends that a number of research areas demand attention, especially with regard to educational institutions, so that such findings may impact the total educational environment in its responsiveness to Asian student needs.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Focus

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates as they attempted to navigate a critical juncture in their lives in terms of educational and career expectations. The primary research question which framed this investigation was "What is the experience of Chinese-American students as they are confronted with self- and perceived parental expectations for achievement in American higher education?" Subsumed under this question are the following secondary research questions:

1. What are the educational and career expectations of the student?
2. What are the perceived parental expectations, and how do these perceived expectations relate to the variables of birth order and gender?
3. If the student perceives differing self- and parental expectations, how do the differences relate to differing self- and perceived parental ethnic identity and acculturation?
4. What are the effects of the perceived differing expectations upon the student, and how does the student deal with these perceived differing expectations?

Demographic Data

In addition to information pertaining specifically to the research questions, the following demographic data were obtained:

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Birth order
4. Year in college
5. Academic major
6. Place of residence during college
7. Father's occupation and highest educational level
8. Mother's occupation and highest educational level
9. Self-identified ethnic identity and level of acculturation
10. Perceived father's ethnic identity and level of acculturation
12. Perceived mother's ethnic identity and level of acculturation

The demographic data served as standard background questions which permit the interviewer to view the respondent in relation to others (Patton, 1994). In addition, the above demographic data of gender, birth order, ethnic identity, and level of acculturation were addressed as variables in this study.

In terms of gender, the Chinese culture has traditionally upheld sons to be more highly valued than daughters, particularly firstborn sons, as they are the ones through whom the family lineage continues. Not only do they carry on the family name but they are also expected to provide social and financial security for aging parents. Consequently, high educational and behavioral expectations have been traditionally placed upon sons. On the other hand, daughters traditionally have been regarded as only transient members of the family because they would someday marry and join their husbands' families. Because of the dearth of research literature on the relationship of educational and career expectations to birth order and gender and because these two factors figure prominently in traditional Chinese expectations, the researcher included these two variables in this study.

Conflicting findings of investigations on the relationship of ethnic identity and

acculturation to academic achievement (Chen, 1996; Hirschman and Wong, 1986; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1987; J. T. Wu, 1992) necessitate continued research. The current study included these two variables to determine their relationship to educational and career expectations and the effects of differing levels between the students' and their perceived parental levels of acculturation.

This chapter commences with a description and justification of the research design and a discussion of methodological issues in this study, followed by a description of (1) the sample, (2) procedure for data collection, and (3) data analyses.

Research Design

The lingering epistemological debate between proponents of two differing paradigms -- the remnants of logical-positivism and phenomenological inquiry -- has led some researchers to "methodolotry," the intense devotion to a method of research (Aper, 1995). But rather than pledging allegiance to a particular paradigm, researchers should first frame the inquiry and then permit the focus and questions of the proposed investigation to inform the methodological selection. Because no one research approach is logically superior to another, pragmatism and appropriateness must take precedence over methodological orthodoxy.

Inasmuch as the current investigation sought to explore the college experience of second-generation Chinese-Americans in terms of confronting issues of personal and parental educational and career expectations, a design was selected that would enable the researcher, unfettered by numerous *a priori* hypotheses, to explore the experience of these students as they enter the higher education arena. The potential richness of data regarding a

little-known experience of Chinese Americans would have been limited by an *a priori* template, typical of a deductive study.

This is not too say, however, that a researcher enters the field *tabula rasa*, when in fact, intuition, hunches, theoretical perspectives, and even expectations are often inextricably intertwined. This presents the researcher with an inevitable paradox. If, on one hand, the research agenda is launched with preconceptions, he or she is accused of bias; but, if, on the other hand, there is no research agenda, important data may totally elude the researcher. The resolution to such a paradox in the present research was effected by first determining a broad research focus with subsequent questions generated by the focus. This resolution finds support in Wolcott's (1988) argument that it is "impossible to embark upon research without some idea of what one is looking for and foolish not to make that quest explicit" (p. 157). Miles and Huberman (1994) further contend that while compelling reasons exist for loosely structured, inductively "grounded" approach to data collection as well as for tightly bound designs, much of qualitative research falls somewhere in between. Openness and flexibility in research design are critical in that qualitative research involves discovery and verification, which means that the design must emerge and develop (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). "Discovery and verification mean moving back and forth between induction and deduction, between experience and reflection on experience, and between greater degrees and lesser degrees of naturalistic inquiry" (Patton, 1990, p. 60).

Rather than maintaining methodological purity, the researcher modified an approach that would best serve the research focus. Upon discovering that the experience of Chinese-American students during their college life was largely undocumented, and that theoretical and solid empirical bases for the research problem were conspicuously absent, the

researcher initially selected the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, upon formulation of the research focus, specific questions evolved which begged treatment, thereby requiring departure from a “pure” grounded theory approach. The specificity of the four major research questions and the absence of field observation defied exclusive use of the loosely bound, inductive approach of grounded theory, so the approach was modified to permit (1) use of a contextual backdrop, and (2) use of an interview protocol from which the four major research questions would be explored. Other than modification based upon these two points, grounded theory was used. Deemed particularly appropriate to answer the research questions posed was the analytic procedure of constant comparison because of its tightly integrated and sophisticated method of analysis.

Thus, based upon the grounded theory approach, this study used interviews as its primary source of data. The researcher-interviewee interface provided a rich contextual tapestry for interpreting, understanding, and making sense of the experiences underlying those answers.

Methodological Issues

Limitations of the Interview Format

Individual interviews served as the primary method of data collection. Creswell (1994) identifies three limitations of the interview format: (1) response bias due to the researcher’s presence, (2) “indirect” information, filtered through the lenses of the interviewee, and (3) data collection outside the natural field setting.

The relevance of the latter two points is not critical to this study. In fact, it is the student’s perception that *is* his or her reality, and only through entering this “filtered”

reality of the student can the researcher begin to understand his or her experience. Albeit that in this study, parental expectations were not self-reported and thereby could not be substantiated, perceived expectancies were nonetheless salient, for it is the student's perception which becomes a part of his or her experience, irrespective of reality. Strauman (personal communication, August 5, 1996) explains this phenomenon further:

If I believe that my parents have certain expectations for me, then both consciously and unconsciously my belief will influence my thoughts, emotions, behaviors, etc. independently from the extent to which my parents REALLY DO expect certain things. The realistic influences and the expectancies interact in complex and fascinating ways.

Thus, the student operates on parental expectancies *vis a vis* his or her perceptions regardless of parents' self-reported expectations, and it is the "perceptual reality" which the research problem addresses. Moreover, the crux of grounded theory is upon the researcher entering the world of another for the purpose of understanding that experience.

Another limitation of the interview format, according to Creswell (1994), is that data collection does not occur in the natural field setting. Although it is true that self-report is retrospective and is subject to accuracy and selectivity of memory, it may be argued that in this study, the effects of differing expectations and resultant management of them may not be directly observable in the natural field setting, nor may access to the natural field setting, in this case the home, be tenable. Furthermore, self report may not only be acceptable but even more desirable because it is, after all, the perceptual world of the student, regardless of accuracy or selectivity of memory, which is germane to this investigation. Moreover, through the use of in-depth individual interviews, important data can be obtained that defy other forms of data collection. Patton (1990) argues that

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. . . . We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe

how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things (p. 278).

Response Bias. As a limitation, response bias does indeed hold troublesome implications for qualitative research. Less than honest responses from the interviewees constitutes a serious methodological concern, and possible reasons for response bias in this study include cultural deference to authority, desire to "save face," and difficulty in accurate articulation of thoughts and feelings, especially of a personal nature with a stranger.

To facilitate mitigation of response bias, the four basic research questions framed the skeletal outline of the Interview Protocol (Appendix A), but it was used only as a guide without strict adherence to format or sequence of questions. However, all questions were addressed at some point during the interview. For maximization of the limited interview time, it was crucial that trust be established as quickly as possible. The immediate goal, then, was to establish an emotionally safe and accepting milieu, so that the interviewer-interviewee interface would be one of mutual trust and openness. To that end, the researcher engaged in the interviewing process with sensitivity and skill, and with the artful framing of questions, which, in turn, facilitated what the researcher believed to be greater honesty, fluidity, and productivity of interviewee response. Indeed trust was quickly established, and every single interview was characterized by apparent openness and honesty. The number of participants in the sample, the voluntary nature of participation, the spontaneity of the responses, the nonverbal communication, including facial expression and body language congruent with verbalization, as well as the verbal content itself -- all led the researcher to believe that response bias was minimally operative, if at all, in this study.

Researcher Bias. Perhaps the most widely recognized limitation of qualitative research is researcher bias. This is a ubiquitous concern whenever researcher-conducted

interviews and researcher-generated analyses of data are used because any perceptual bias of the researcher presents grave implications for the credibility of the research findings. For the researcher to claim pure objectivity flaunts ignorance, but for the researcher to claim pure subjectivity extinguishes research credibility.

The researcher in this study maintained full cognizance and acceptance of her own subjectivity. As a small child immigrating to the United States, raised by first-generation Chinese parents, and now as wife of a first-generation spouse and mother of two second-generation Chinese-Americans, one of whom is in the age cohort of the research sample, she recognized the inherent potential of emotional identification with the research sample and/or with their parents. Attempts to deal with possible bias forthrightly included, first and foremost, recognition of its potential power, followed by specific measures to control the subjectivity as described herein. Although it is impossible to shed one's values and biases, it *is* possible and critical to acknowledge them and to consciously hold them in abeyance as much as possible and to enter the research arena as an open-minded learner, ready to share in the experiences of the subjects.

Miles and Huberman (1994) address the issue of bias by underscoring the importance of analytic honesty. Because to some extent, insight and intuition enter into qualitative research, there is a tendency to overweigh facts confirming researcher bias and to ignore or forget data inconsistent with the bias. Miles and Huberman (1994) further issue a caveat of the dangerous position of the qualitative researcher as a one-person entity who collects and analyzes data and subsequently arrives at conclusions in the absence of canons, decision rules, algorithms, or other safeguards of validity.

In this study, potential sources of bias were guarded with a variety of measures. Besides audio recording of the interviews and note taking, the researcher, during the

process of data collection and analysis, concurrently engaged in ongoing memoing, provisional data displays, literature review, and consultation with other researchers.

Memoing permits immediate recording of the researcher's ideas, perceptions, and even "a little conceptual elaboration" based upon data (Glaser, 1978, p. 84), and in so doing, forces the researcher to record and group together in concrete terms impressions that otherwise may bias the researcher. Miles and Huberman posit that memos are "one of the most useful and powerful sense-making tools at hand" (1994, p. 72). These authors also view data displays as a useful part of analysis that forces the researcher to assemble organized information in a compact form that succinctly enables him or her to draw conclusions or to decide on the next course of action. This process is valuable in militating against inaccurate explanations and unwarranted conclusions. The researcher also followed Miles and Huberman's recommendation (1994) of using numerical indices such as time, dates, and intensity of data to see how robust the insights really are.

In terms of literature review, Patton (1990) sees this as presenting a quandary in that it can either heighten or diminish researcher bias. Although the review of relevant literature may be useful in focusing the study, it may also reduce the researcher's openness to what may emerge in the field. However, simultaneous literature review with fieldwork arguably permits a "creative interplay among the processes of data collection, literature review, and researcher introspection" (p. 163).

Besides the above measures, the researcher, throughout the data collection process, daily consulted and shared observations with an experienced qualitative researcher for the purpose of cross-validation of observations, explanations, and conclusions. Additionally, the very process of constant comparison of data to data both within- and between-interviews and with the literature provided concurrent verification.

As with any research, maintaining a critical, skeptical stance is essential. In this study, attempts were made to recognize outliers and exceptions to general patterns and to seek rival explanations. Otherwise, a tendency exists to minimize exceptions to general patterns and to automatically fit new data, sometimes inappropriately, into established patterns and to see things that are not there. In the current study, for example, an outlier was found when, contrary to all other respondents reporting varying levels of parental expectations for academic achievement, one lone respondent expressed the wish that her parents would manifest interest in her academics because her laudatory achievements had eluded parental acknowledgement.

Another way in which the researcher can maintain a critical, skeptical stance and thereby enhance research credibility is through the use of rival explanations. In this study, searching for rival explanations included reversing plausible causal associations. For example, the researcher reversed the causal association between the students' perception of increased parental support and improved parent-child relationship. Rather than interpreting that increased parental support led to improved parent-child relationship, the researcher sought the plausibility that improved parent-child relationship led to a perception of increased parental support.

This study was further strengthened by the process of triangulation -- the use multiple sources and multiple modes of evidence in research. Of the four basic types of triangulation identified by Denzin (1978) -- (1) data source triangulation, (2) investigator triangulation, (3) theory triangulation, and (4) methodological triangulation -- data, theory, and methodological measures of triangulation were used in this study.

In terms of data source triangulation, the data consisted of not only verbal but also observational data from the interviews, with subsequent comparisons of the two as a means

of cross-checking consistency of information. Additionally, the researcher spent time on the research site to further check the data and to gain a broader perspective of Chinese-American student experience. She studied university artifacts, including publications, bulletin boards, and graffiti, attended student demonstrations, visited a Chinese language class, met with officers and representatives of ethnic student organizations, and observed and interacted informally with numerous Chinese-American students.

Although these informal contacts were not recorded in any way, they nevertheless provided a contextual background against which meaning could be made of the formal interview data, such as the importance of Chinese-American and Asian-American student organizations as a source of peer support and ethnic identity. Even the following incidental encounter converged with a pattern emerging from the study -- strong parental influence in the students' career choice. After spending a weekend in another city, the researcher was boarding the train to return to the university for continuation of data collection. Two Chinese-American females also boarded to return to campus. Upon greeting each other with surprise that they both lived in the same city, they immediately asked each other about her academic major. As one student responded by stating her major, the immediate addendum was, "but my parents want me to take computer science." Indeed the centrality of parental influence was further reinforced.

Denzin (1978) underscores the value in approaching data with multiple hypotheses and perspectives. By subjecting data that may refute the researcher's original position to alternate theories permits assessment of the utility and power of the data. In terms of theory triangulation, the findings of this study were subjected to the literature, with varying results. Many of the findings were not supported and others were partially supported. In strident opposition to the data was the contextual backdrop the research. At the inception of

this study, the individualism-collectivism model (Hofstede, 1980) was selected to provide a context within which to understand and make meaning of the data. However upon data analysis, the findings were discovered to be incompatible with this contextual backdrop. As a result of further literature review, alternative theoretical perspectives were found to provide more satisfactory explanations for the findings of the study. This type of theory triangulation conforms to Denzin (1978) and Westie's (1957) position that multiple perspectives rather than a single perspective provide value. Westie (1957) further recommends that presupposed relationships that fail to survive empirical testing be deleted, the best interpretations reexamined, and the theories from which they were derived reassessed. Thus, in the current study, the process of theory triangulation and the incorporation of multiple theoretical perspectives on the problem conformed to the scientific method, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

An additional type of triangulation, methodological triangulation, was also used in this study. Although quantitative analysis consisted of minimal, descriptive and nonparametric statistics, nevertheless, subjecting the data to both quantitative and qualitative review minimized the likelihood to establishing spurious relationships, thereby enhancing credibility of findings.

Another critical consideration is the "strength" of the data. For example, two of the respondents articulated with great passion on culture conflicts. The tendency to be swayed by these two students' eloquence was indeed great unless their data be balanced by less eloquently expressed but equally important data from other students. While data strength must be considered carefully in that the eloquence of expression not foreclose accuracy of the total picture, by the same token, data strength must be considered as important as numerical indices. For example, merely counting the number of students reporting

experiencing parental expectations has limited value. Only by weighting the intensity of expectations based upon verbal report, nonverbal communication, including facial expression, body language, and rapidity, pitch, pattern, and inflections of speech, as well as other observational cues could the researcher obtain a more comprehensive understanding the students' experience.

Conceptual Equivalence

Another methodological concern is conceptual equivalence. Because a psychological construct may hold very different meanings for different groups, conceptual equivalence must be addressed. According to Okazaki and Sue (1995, p. 371), "variability of and sensitivity to contextual factors may be increased as they [ethnic minorities] move between a traditional cultural setting (e.g., family and ethnic communities) and a more mainstream American cultural setting (e.g., work, school, etc.)." Although such constructs as acculturation and pressure may conceivably have different meanings for the participants in this study; but due to the intelligence, language fluency, and assertiveness of this sample, the likelihood of diverse meanings for such constructs was minimally, if at all, present. Nevertheless, to maintain clear, accurate communication as well as to mitigate conceptual inequivalence, the researcher used interviewing techniques of rephrasing and restating, and she sought for clarification when necessary. Likewise, the interviewees were assertive and took initiative in asking for clarification from the researcher.

Inducements

The issue of inducements was addressed in this study. Because of the students' academic pressures and stringent schedules, and because of the value of their contribution to the study, monetary compensation was deemed to be a reasonable consideration. After deliberation and consultation with other researchers and with the University's Committee

for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) of the institution where the research was conducted, the researcher finalized upon \$10 as a reasonable monetary remuneration for each participant. This amount was confirmed by the institution as appropriate to the type and length of participation required for the study. The University's Guidelines of the Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (August 25, 1995, p. 4) state that "if remuneration is offered, CPHS will review both the amount and the proposed method of payment to assure that they do not entail coercion or undue influence."

Sample

The sample for this study was comprised of 30 second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates at a highly selective, research and doctorate-granting public university on the West Coast of the United States. This institution was chosen because of its sizable ethnic Chinese student population, which at the time of data collection was 4,250 (excluding international students); this figure represents nearly 50 percent of the Asian enrollment and 20.6 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment, exclusive of international students (University Office of Student Research). Further delineation of generational status (i.e., first-, second-, or third/later generation) of the Chinese-American students was not available.

Participation in the study was voluntary, the inclusion criteria of which were that the subjects be single second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates between the ages of 18 and 24 years of age. The rationale for the age and marital status criteria was based upon the assumption that parental influence upon older students and married students as opposed to traditional college-age, single students is different, and differences in age and marital status would introduce additional variables beyond the scope of this investigation.

Only second-generation Chinese-American students were included because the literature suggests that it is this cohort that encounters the greatest amount of culture conflict (Chen, 1996; Padilla et al., 1985).

The sample under investigation was comprised of 20 females and 10 males, ranging in age from 18 to 21, with a mean age of 19.53. The disproportionate female representation in the sample was reflective of the fortuity of the voluntary nature of participation rather than the gender representation at the university, the gender division of which was 49.24% female and 50.76% male. Of the 20 females, half were firstborns, and of the 10 males, six were firstborns, one of which was an only child.

Consistent with the purpose of qualitative research, that is, to form a unique interpretation of phenomena and not to generalize findings (Merriam, 1988), a purposeful rather than a random sample was obtained. Such a sample provides information-rich cases intended to illuminate the questions under study (Patton, 1994). In the current investigation, the intent of sample selection was for locating participants meeting specified criteria for in-depth exploration of the experience of a particular group of Chinese-American undergraduates and not for generalization to other groups. Thus, sample selection was based upon a population that would best provide a window into its world so that those in higher education can better understand and thereby better serve this group.

Procedure

After obtaining approval for research (Appendix B & C) from the respective committees for human subjects experimentation from both the university at which the researcher was enrolled and from the university at which the research was to be conducted the researcher began laying groundwork. Prior to arrival on site for data collection, she

made contacts with key actors on campus to inform these individuals of the project, to obtain a sense of Chinese-American student life, and to solicit assistance with recruitment (Appendices D, E, F, G, H).

Upon arrival, the researcher met with the chair of the English department and with the coordinators of the Asian-American Studies program and the Chinese Language program to obtain permission to make announcements in class personally or to ask the faculty to make announcements regarding the research. Announcements regarding the study, its purpose, and criteria for inclusion were made by faculty in their respective Asian-American Studies classes, and by the researcher in four Chinese Language classes and in one section of freshman English class. Interested students were invited to meet with the researcher immediately after class for further information and, if desired, for scheduling interviews. Additionally, the researcher made personal contacts with representatives of various Chinese-American student organizations, among which were social, cultural, religious, preprofessional, and service groups, requesting that information regarding the research be disseminated to their members.

At the mutually agreed-upon time and place (an unused classroom), the researcher met with each student. Prior to commencing the interview, the researcher reiterated the purpose of the interview and orally addressed all the points of the Informed Consent and Disclosure form (Appendix I). She then gave the Informed Consent and Disclosure form to the student for perusal, after which he or she was provided opportunity for questions and clarification. In every case, the student readily signed the form.

The researcher then asked demographic questions of age, sex, birth order, year in college, place of residence during college, academic major, parents' occupation and highest educational level, and self-identified self- and perceived parental levels of acculturation and

ethnic identity. For the purpose of this study, ethnic identity is defined as the cultural subgroup of a race with which one aligns oneself; and the construct of acculturation refers to the acquisition of the majority's group culture, including its values, ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes, by a minority (Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980), although not necessarily at the exclusion of one's culture of origin. Ascertaining the students' sense of their own ethnic identity and level of acculturation and their perception of their parents' ethnic identity and levels of acculturation was considered important for a better understanding of the cultural context against which the students' observations, descriptions, and assessments would be made.

The student's designation of self- and perceived parental ethnic identity was considered sufficient for the purpose of this study. The student was asked "How would you identify yourself -- as Chinese, American, Chinese-American, Asian-American, or another designation? Which of these designations would you give to your mother? Your father?" The data appear in Appendix J.

The use of an established instrument such as the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA) (Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987) was considered but, after careful deliberation, was not used for the following reasons: (1) the SL-ASIA is geared toward the larger Asian-American population, rather than specific second-generation Chinese-Americans and contains questions not relevant for this sample, such as country of birth, generation status, and spoken and written language fluency (Asian or English); (2) the originators of SL-ASIA raise several issues regarding its use, one of which is that it does not separate the various Asian subgroups, whereas the original version of this scale, developed for Hispanics (Cuellar, et al., 1980), was later found to be insufficient, and separate instruments were then designed for Hispanic subgroups (Suinn,

et al., 1987); (3) some of the questions, such as belief in Asian cultural values, would be addressed in the course of the interview; and (4) the time required for administration of the Acculturation Scale would reduce available interview time. Furthermore, the LA-ASIA is unidimensional in conceptualization. A more recent acculturation measure, the Asian and Anglo Acculturation scales by Lee and revised by Kohatsu (cited in Lew, 1994) is bidimensional in conceptualization but still suffers from a similar weakness as the SL-ASIA in that no distinction is made among the Asian subgroups, although it does advise the respondent that "If the term 'Asian' is too global for you, try to replace it with the ethnicity you and your family might identify with. . . ." (Lew, 1994, p. 154).

In this study, each student was asked, "On a scale of 1 to 5, with '1' being 'very Chinese' and '5' being 'very American,' where would you place yourself? Your mother? Your father?" For the purposes of this study, the students' assessment of their own and their perceived parents' levels of acculturation by simply selecting a position on a 5-point scale was considered adequate. These numerical indices were employed merely as convenient markers and were not intended to reflect a psychometric standard of interval or ratio data.

After the demographic data were collected, the researcher for the next few moments engaged the student in general conversation for the purpose of facilitating development of rapport. (e.g., "There sure is a lot of activity on campus today!" or "How has your day been so far?") At this point the audiotape recorder was turned on, and the interview commenced. The researcher opened the interview with broad questions, such as "What kind of academic goals do you have for yourself?" or "Tell me about the educational expectations you hold for yourself." From these broad questions, the researcher moved to more narrowly focused questions, at times asking for clarification, elaboration, and

examples. The Interview Protocol used (Appendix A) was an evolution of the four basic research questions designed to explore the experience of the students in terms of educational and career expectations.

This format is consistent with Rubin and Rubin's (1995) three types of qualitative questions: (1) main questions, which provide scaffolding for the interview, (2) probe questions, which clarify and specify, and (3) follow up questions, which tap into more detail and depth. In the Interview Protocol (Appendix A), the main questions form the main headings (I, II, III); the probe questions comprise the subheadings (A, B, C, D, E, F, G); and the follow up questions occupy the remainder of the Protocol (1, 2, 3).

To facilitate development of rapport and free flow of exchange, the researcher did not rigidly adhere to the sequence of the Interview Protocol, but rather sought to maintain a fluidity which is essential to the purpose of grounded theory; otherwise, artificial constriction of the responses may severely impact the findings. Strauss and Corbin (1990) caution against strict adherence to an interview guide because such rigidity may foreclose on data possibilities, limit the amount and type of data gathered, and prevent achieving the depth and variation of desired concepts discussed. Notwithstanding the caveats, critical points of the four basic research questions regarding the student's experience in higher education relative to self- and parental expectations, effects of expectations upon the student, and strategies used in managing the differences were all addressed.

The interview concluded with the researcher briefly summarizing the content of the interview and then asking for any additional information which might illuminate the study. Appreciation was expressed to the student for not only his or her time but also for the valuable contribution made to the understanding of the experience of Chinese-American students in higher education. At this point, the monetary remuneration of \$10 was given.

The students were extremely responsive and articulate, requiring minimal prompting by the researcher. A high level of interviewee interest was maintained throughout the course of each interview, and many of the students expressed appreciation for the opportunity to talk and to be heard. One student who had recounted some very painful experiences expressed deep appreciation for the interview and confided that "This isn't something I talk about very much." After several students expressed great interest in the findings of the study, from the fourth interview onward, the researcher began informing the students at the end of the interviews that if they wished an abstract of the study, they may give their names and summer mailing addresses to the researcher. All the students from the fourth interview onward chose to do so.

Data Recordings

Two audiotape recorders were used, one providing backup in the event of loss of a tape or mechanical malfunction. Additionally, throughout the interview the researcher made notes of the exchange, followed by her perceptions, observations, and reflections of the process.

Transcription services were procured through transcription service pools, and the Transcription Agreement forms (Appendix K) were executed prior to delivery of tapes. The purpose of the Transcription Agreement was to guard the confidential nature of the interviews; by signing the agreement, the transcriptionist consented to abide by specified conditions. The audiotaped data from each interview were transcribed verbatim, with the exception of the elimination of meaningless, repetitive phrases such as "you know," "I mean," and "uh." The interviews were transcribed in an expeditious manner to facilitate early analysis that might influence remaining data collection.

Data Analysis

The primary method of data analysis was the constant comparative procedure, in which comparisons were made data to data, incident to incident, and category to category, as well as cross-comparisons of the above. Because the process of "data collection and analysis is intricately intertwined, and must occur alternately because the analysis directs the sampling of data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 59), the first five interviews were transcribed within two days of the beginning of data collection. Preliminary analysis was made on these five interviews, in which recurrent themes were extricated and recorded as provisional categories. For example, birth order and gender were quite early identified as provisional categories with emerging data pointing to a plausible relationship between these two factors and perceived parental expectations. Because data collection and analysis were contingent upon each other, these early categorizations were only tentative and provisional, but the process sensitized the researcher to possible future data support, which in this case did find further verification.

Five copies of each transcribed interview were made, from which one copy was used for initial open coding. This is the process whereby the verbatim interview data are taken apart and analyzed. The first level of analysis is conceptualization. As concepts were compared against one another, similar ones that appear to pertain to a specific phenomenon were grouped together into categories and labeled. All categories were recorded on a master sheet with the interview number and page number identifying the place where the data were found. This identifier was color-coded to match the color used in marking the data on the transcribed document. Subsequent copies of each interview manuscript were used for separating the data. This was done by cutting up the pages and assembling the various portions of pages together into their respective categories. After meticulous cross-

checks against the master sheet for verification of consistent categorical names, such as parental strategies for motivation, culture conflict, and conflict mediation, each category along with its subcategories were stored in a separate receptacle for easy retrieval.

Through this process of decontextualization -- removing the data from the context of a particular interview, emerging properties (characteristics) and dimensionalities of each phenomenon were extricated. For example, a recurring phenomenon was noted -- high expectations from one parent were frequently compensated by support from the other parent. From this phenomenon evolved two categories, "pressure" and "support." Certain characteristics were noted in these two categories, such as sources of pressure and support, and conditions under which pressure or support were experienced. From these characteristics, dimensionalities, such as the level or intensity of pressure and support, were extrapolated. Ranging from absent to high, the levels were then assigned scores as follows: absent = 0, low = 1, moderate = 2, and high = 3. They were then subjected to analysis by the variables of gender and birth order.

As categories are linked together, they may be found to be subcategories which can be subsumed under a larger category in a set of relationships. In this case, pressure and support were subcategories of "parental expectations," which in turn was a subsumed under a larger category of "expectations." Strauss and Corbin (1990) term this process of putting data back together in new ways and making connections between categories and subcategories "axial coding."

Through constant comparisons of incidents and data that evolved, similarities, differences, and relationships of the categories resulted in a network of conceptual relationships. Strauss and Corbin (1990) term this process selective coding, and this forms the network base for integration and finally synthesis. The data were then laid out through

diagrams to graphically represent conceptual relationships between categories. For example, the process of selective coding of the relationship of pressure and support led to a pressure/support ratio for each student, in which the level of pressure and the level of support were assessed. The researcher then prepared an abbreviated summary for each interview, in which demographic data were recorded and each of the four research questions was addressed.

Finally, to assure proper recontextualization of extracted phenomenon, each interview was then analyzed and re-analyzed in its entirety, after which re-categorization was made of some of the data because the original category was not compatible with the intent of the interviewee. Using the abbreviated summaries along with the major categories, linkages between categories and relationships of phenomena, processes, and outcomes were illuminated. The findings were then compared to the literature, and explanations and rival explanations were sought.

In attempting to explain the findings, the researcher returned to the literature because the original contextual backdrop for this study was found to be inadequate in explaining the findings. The search resulted in the discovery of alternative theoretical perspectives that provided a more comprehensive explanation of the findings. This culminated in a portrait of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates at a highly selective university as they attempt to navigate their experience in terms of self- and parental educational and career expectations.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates as they attempt to navigate a critical juncture in their lives in terms of educational and career expectations. The primary research question framing this investigation was "What is the experience of Chinese-American students as they are confronted with self- and perceived parental expectations for achievement in American higher education?" Subsumed under this question were the following secondary research questions:

1. What are the educational and career expectations of the student?
2. What are the perceived parental expectations, and how do these perceived expectations relate to the variables of birth order and gender?
3. If the student perceives differing self- and parental expectations, how do the differences relate to differing self- and perceived parental ethnic identity and acculturation?
4. What are the effects of the perceived differing expectations upon the student, and how does the student deal with these perceived differing expectations?

The method of data collection involved 45-minute, semi-structured, individual interviews with second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates at a highly selective, research and doctorate-granting public university on the West Coast. The sample consisted of 30 students, 10 males and 20 females. The disproportionate female representation in the sample was reflective of the fortuity of the voluntary nature of participation rather than the

gender representation in the university. The Asian-American gender division at the institution at the time of data collection was 49.24% female and 50.76% male.

Inasmuch as this investigation explored the students' experience through the use of semi-structured interviews, a rich and vast array of data emerged, providing a window of understanding into the lives of the students. Also emerging was a contextual landscape against which meaning may be made of the students' reported experiences. Thus, this chapter commences with a description of this landscape -- the family context of the student. Thence follows four main divisions in response to the research questions: (1) Educational expectations, (2) Career expectations, (3) Effects of differing expectations upon the student, and (4) Management of differing expectations. Because of the significant role of Chinese culture in the experience of these students, the chapter then identifies and discusses cultural themes emerging from the interviews, and concludes with a summary of the findings of the study.

The Family Context

Family Configuration

All of the 30 students in the sample were raised in California, except for one student whose family moved to California from the Midwest prior to her last year in high school. Three of the students came from divorced families, and three other students' fathers are deceased. The remaining 24 students are from intact families. Nineteen of the students originated from nuclear families with two children, six with three children, and four with four children. One was an only child. The sample was divided nearly equally between firstborn and laterborn children, with 16 firstborns (including an only child) and 14 laterborns (one middle child and 13 lastborns). Appendix J summarizes demographic data.

At least three of the families, either currently or during the students' younger years, were intergenerational, with grandparents residing with the families and, in two of the cases, essentially raising the grandchildren. Several of the students had grandparents who, although not residing with them, nevertheless lived within the vicinity and maintained interest in the students' lives, particularly with respect to their educational and career pursuits.

Cultural values figured prominently in the families, reportedly undergirding every aspect of their lives. The students reported transmission of cultural values and expectations from their parents. Most of the families were active in the larger Chinese community and socialized primarily within their ethnic group.

Language. English was the preferred language of the students and was, in most instances, combined with the Chinese dialect of either Taiwanese or Cantonese when spoken with parents in the home. English was used with siblings. Nearly all the students reported parental coercion to attend Chinese language school on weekends throughout elementary and high school years to learn Mandarin, the official Chinese language. Chinese school proved to be a point of dissension between parents and children. One female recounted, "Friday nights for 13 years. It was horrible! From kindergarten to senior year. I hated it, but I did it."

Ironically, some of the students who had registered vehement opposition to Chinese language school attendance now elected to enroll in Chinese language classes at the university. These students expressed regret for not having taken advantage of earlier opportunities. One female remarked, "When I look at the books I'm reading now I know I could never have done it before. . . This is actually part of me. It makes me feel really good. It's kind of exciting too because I go home now and talk to Mom [in Chinese]."

The researcher attended one of the language class sessions and witnessed a high level of interest and diligence of the students in learning the language. The interest extended beyond mere language acquisition to cultural understanding and travels to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China.

Socioeconomic Status

The socioeconomic status of this sample, based upon the students' report of their parents' educational and occupational levels, was established to be middle- to upper middle class, thus presenting a socioeconomic status higher than average for the general population in the United States.

All of the parents had immigrated from East Asia during their young adult years, the majority of whom had originated in Taiwan. The educational levels among both the mothers and fathers were high. Among the mothers, the highest degree held included a Ph.D., six master's degrees, and 16 baccalaureate degrees. Among the fathers, two Ph.D.'s, two M.D.'s, 10 master's degrees, seven baccalaureate degrees were represented. The majority of the remaining parents had some college, except for one for whom high school was the highest level of education.

The occupations of the parents likewise were high status. Other than one nurse and one biochemist, the remaining mothers represented business-related occupations such as accounting. Administrative and management positions were also represented. Three of the mothers were self-employed in family business and four were currently full-time homemakers. Seven of the fathers were engineers, two were physicians, one was a research chemist, eleven were in business-related occupations, including administrative, management, and consultative positions, five were self-employed in family business, one

was an electrical technician, two were unemployed, and the occupation of one of the deceased fathers was unknown (Appendix J).

Any relationship between socioeconomic status and educational expectations and achievement could not be adequately established in this study because of the homogeneity of socioeconomic status.

As described in the foregoing section, the contextual landscape of this sample was one in which the culture of origin played a dominant role. With the parents designated by the students as more "Chinese" than the students themselves and with cultural values so pervasive in their lives, the ensuing findings of this study must be understood within such a cultural context.

Educational Expectations

Students' Own Educational Expectations

In response to the first research question, "What are the educational and career expectations of the student," all of the students were found to hold high educational and career expectations. Besides wanting to excel in their undergraduate studies, 25 out of the 30 students held aspirations for graduate and/or professional school. Although all perceived high parental expectations, 13 students held even higher expectations for themselves. Twelve students in particular, eight females, five of whom were firstborns, and four males, two of whom were firstborns, reported extreme internal pressure to achieve.

Such inner drive was articulated by a senior molecular cell biology major. "My mom will love me regardless of the grades I get, but I will not love me regardless of the grades that I get. I will be very disappointed." A firstborn female expressed experiencing

pressure to prove herself when compared to others:

My parents have friends whose children are all going to Harvard and will all be engineers and everything. Sometimes I think I should live up to that expectation so they can say something like that. Sometimes parents are always bragging about their kids. And then there's me who's an English major. I feel inadequate, like I have to prove myself, which puts pressure on me.

Adjustment of Expectations. Of major concern for all the students, but particularly for those in their first two years, was the keen scholastic competition encountered in their undergraduate experience. Accustomed to ranking at or near the top in secondary school, they have encountered the academic rigor of a highly selective university, the discovery of which, in some cases, has been difficult to communicate to their parents.

Grade point averages have plummeted for some of the students and have dropped for all of them. A firstborn female junior business major stated, "It's a pretty big shock when you come here the first year. You think, 'no problem, I'm smart.' In high school I was in the top 10 percent, so here you go to class and put more time in than you did in high school, and you're still not making the grades. It's such an ego blow!" She also stated, "I always find it very stressful. . . but as of now, I can't say I'm really happy with how I'm doing here. I would like my GPA to be higher."

"I anticipated my grades might go down a little bit," according to a female junior computer science major, "but I found the upper division computer science classes were more challenging than I thought they would be. . . but at the same time I'm learning the most in those classes. . . so I don't feel too bad if I do a little worse." Although the students expressed a desire to excel academically, particularly those planning to pursue graduate and/or professional education, they were able to realistically assess their performance within the scholastically competitive environment of this highly selective university. Most of the students were able to accept the goal of "doing my best," but three

of the students described feeling driven to attain, at a minimum, a grade point average established by their major departments in order to remain in the major.

Sources of Expectations. Besides internal expectations, students also described experiencing expectations from several external sources, the strongest of which clearly was from parents. Another source, albeit weaker, is grandparents. At times, the pressure to excel was heightened by uncertainty of career and by divergent expectations from multiple sources:

I feel a lot of pressure. I feel if I don't get in [to business school], my plans are shot. I don't know what I'm going to be doing. In terms of pressure from myself or my parents, my parents are pretty supportive, but it's--I feel pressure to do well. It doesn't matter what I'm doing as long as I do well. Business is acceptable [to parents] since my dad is in business, so that's an acceptable choice. But my grandparents think I should be a doctor. That's it. Well, a lawyer's okay too. But I never wanted to do either. So I feel a lot of pressure.

Additional expectations were from the Chinese community, the educational arena, and from the "model minority" stereotype itself. According to the students, conversations at social gatherings of the Chinese community frequently revolved around the children and their achievements. Additionally, the environment of this university engendered high expectations for academic achievement. Similarly, students reported experiencing expectations from the "model minority" image that stereotypes all Asian Americans as being highly motivated and capable. "When I was growing up, all the Asians I grew up with were very -- all American-born, but all top of the class, very studious, and it was automatically stereotyped. . . that if you were Asian you were going to a very good school." Another student recalled her fourth grade teacher in handing back papers would say, "Why can't you all be like her? I'm thinking of turning you all into Chinese people, and then you could all be like her."

Perceived Parental Expectations for Education

In response to the second research question, "What are the perceived parental expectations, and how do these perceived expectations relate to the variables of birth order and gender," the researcher found that, first of all, both parents reportedly were united in their expectations for their children's education. Education was perceived to be of paramount importance to the parents and, in some families, reportedly the main topic of conversation. High parental standards, echoed by a number of students, were articulated by a sophomore female: "Education has been hugely important all my life. Straight A's, nothing less. Even A- is not very acceptable."

Equally important as obtaining an education was the concrete evidence -- grades -- that the student was succeeding.

I didn't think that my grades were going to be sent to them [parents]. And in fact, I was on some list, like an honors list, and the school sent a letter to my parents congratulating them basically. But to them it was like, "Oh, you didn't get a 4.0. You only got a 3.9." So my mom said, "you need to work harder."

The prestige of the institution was also important to the parents. A firstborn female stated, "Also I know it's every Asian parent's dream getting their child into a good school." Even though several students had wished to attend other universities, and one student had received a scholarship elsewhere, the parents nevertheless thought "this would be a better school. It's a lot more prestigious." This university was also the alma mater for the fathers and older siblings of several of the students.

Factors Influencing Parental Expectations. A number of factors influenced parental expectations for academic achievement. Birth order was a powerful factor, with higher expectations for the firstborn. A weaker but nonetheless important factor was gender. Likewise, socioeconomic status did not appear to correspond with expectations, although

the relative homogeneity of the socioeconomic status in this sample precluded any definitive conclusion.

The parents' own experiences were a strong factor in expectations held for their children. A number of students explained that their parents were eager for them to have opportunities which they themselves did not have. Several students spoke of their parents having experienced serious economic losses, one of the consequences of which was that the parents deeply feared economic demise in their children's future. This fear was played out in the parents' subsequent insistence that their children select careers that would reduce such chances of economic catastrophe. With 15 of the fathers and 20 of the mothers in business-related occupations, many of the children were encouraged to pursue business. Additionally, grandparents also held influence, although minimal, upon the parents' expectations for the children. And of course, the culture, philosophy, and values as well as the level of acculturation were found to pervasively undergird all other influences.

Pattern of Intensity of Expectations. A phenomenon emerging from this study was that high educational expectations reportedly first commenced with the beginning of formal education, the intensity of which had increased and peaked during the last two years of high school, followed by a considerable reduction when the student entered college. Reportedly the heightened pressure during the junior and senior years of high school, the time of SATs and college applications, was fueled by the drive for admission to a prestigious institution. The primary reason for diminished pressure after college enrollment was thus explained by one of the students: "Basically the goal was to get into college. So since that was achieved, then everything was okay." Another student supported this by stating that "now that I'm here and they feel happy about it, I guess they feel their job is done." Other reasons cited for diminished pressure included parental satisfaction with the

institution, as well as the independence fostered by the mere geographical distance from parents. Interestingly, even the two females and one male who continued to reside with their parents likewise reported less pressure. Nearly all the students discovered that the resultant decrease in parental pressure improved their relationship with their parents. Figure IV-1 depicts the pattern of intensity of expectations experienced by the students.

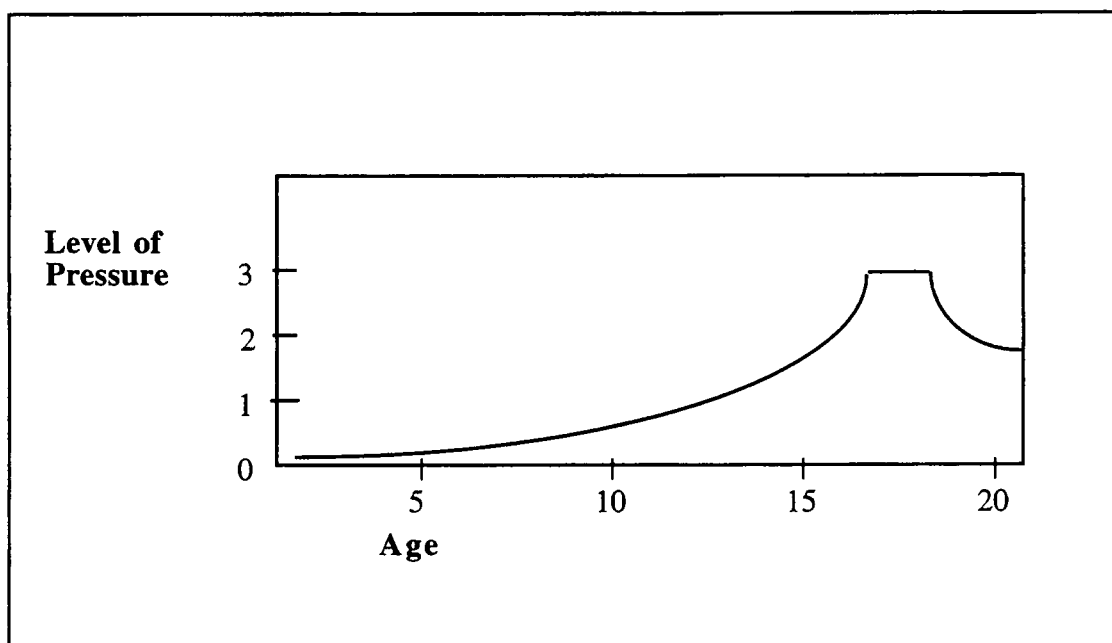


Figure IV-1. Pattern of Intensity of Expectations.

Levels of Intensity. In an effort to better assess the pressure for achievement through the years as described by the students, the researcher identified four levels of pressure according to intensity: high, moderate, low, and absent. Identification of levels of intensity was based upon (1) the student's own assessment of the level of pressure, (2) references to specific incidents and examples, and (3) the overall tenor of the interview. Many students described a different level of pressure from each parent individually, in

which case the level assigned was determined by the parental dyadic composite as described by the students. For example, if the mother was described as exerting a high level of pressure and the father a low level, the dyadic pressure would be established to be at the moderate level.

The level of intensity was identified as "high" when the pressure was perceived to be of such propelling force that the student had difficulty handling it, with a resultant sense of futility and defeat. For example, a firstborn female spoke of such intense pressures between seventh and tenth grades to the point of serious suicidal contemplations "because so much of this pressure -- I wasn't dealing with it well. . . . It seemed to me that nothing was ever good enough." Another example of a high level of parental pressure was from a firstborn male:

I came in top 20 in my high school class, so that was acceptable. I always maintained a 4.0, or above, GPA; that was acceptable for them, even though every time I got my report card they were disgusted with it. "What is this?" They just verbally said this is not right, not correct.

Reporting high levels of pressure were three out of 10 males, all of whom were firstborn, and nine out of 20 females, six of whom were firstborn. Thus, out of 12 students reporting high levels of pressure, nine were firstborns. Furthermore, five of the females, including three firstborns, complained that they were unable to fulfill parental expectations.

Intensity of pressure was identified at the moderate level in cases in which parents conveyed high but reasonable expectations, coupled with flexibility and understanding when those expectations were not met. A firstborn female assessed that her level of pressure was

not the intensity that my peers had. I know my Chinese classmates -- if they didn't get an A in classwork, their parents would punish them at home. . . . They would

lock their kids in the garage as punishment for not practicing piano, little things like that. I know that my parents value my doing well in school, but not to that point. They understood if I didn't do too well, and would say I needed to do better.

Three students reported a moderate level of pressure, two males, one of whom was a firstborn, and one firstborn female.

A low level of pressure was identified when definite parental expectations were perceived, but along with the expectations was opportunity for dialogue, with acceptance of the student's decision. "I can discuss my side with her [mother]. If I really think that I know what I'm doing, she'll leave me alone, but if she sees me wavering a little bit [as if] I'm not so sure what I should do, she'll try to convince me of what to do." This firstborn, a premed female, whose father passed away seven years ago, remarked that

Actually, my mom is pretty cool about grades and stuff. Before when I was younger, my mom would tell me when I said I wasn't getting an A, that it was okay. Just to try hard. I thought she was going to say even an A isn't good enough. If I tell her I really worked hard, she is okay with that. She doesn't mind it it's less than an A.

Reporting a low level of pressure were eight students, two males, one a firstborn, and six females, one of whom was firstborn.

An absence pressure was identified when the student perceived attainable expectations from parents who were easygoing and whose expectations were congruent with, or even lower than, self-expectations. Frequently these students used the term "relaxed" in describing their parents. In response to the question, "How much pressure do you feel?" a firstborn female responded, "None at all. . . . I think my parents really know that my sister and I did well in school, so they had no reason to be worried or concerned." Another female's parents have been "relaxed and not pushy -- as long as I'm happy" to the extent that she was dubious about their realization of her achievements. She perceived her

parents' emphasis on her well-being precluded their recognition of the rigor and competitiveness of her program. Reporting no pressure were seven students, three males, one of whom was an only child, and four females, two of whom were firstborn.

Because of small cell sizes, the four levels of pressure were combined into two categories -- absent/low and moderate/high -- for a 2 x 2 contingency table. A chi square analysis was calculated to determine the relationship of pressure to birth order, but no significant relationship between these two variables was found. However, by maintaining the four levels of pressure as displayed in Table IV-1, one can readily see that over half (nine) of the 16 firstborns experienced a high level of pressure. This along with the intensity of pressure described by these firstborns led the researcher to believe that a positive relationship did indeed exist between birth order and pressure.

In terms of gender, one-half of the males and one-half of the females reported absent/low levels pressure, whereas the other half of each gender reported moderate/high levels of pressure. Thus no relationship was found between pressure and gender. Table IV-1 tallies the students' reported levels of pressure.

Levels of Emotional Support. In many cases, it was found that the pressure was undergirded by emotional support from parents. Moreover, any emotional support perceived by the student for his or her educational endeavors were concomitantly perceived for endeavors in other areas of life as well, including co-curricular involvement. Four levels of support were identified: high, moderate, low, and absent. Similar to the method of arriving at the level of intensity of pressure, the level of emotional support was established by assessing the parental dyad as described by the students. For example, a firstborn female reportedly received no emotional support from her father but concomitantly experienced generous support from her mother, as illustrated by the following statement: "If what I'm doing is not something that she [mother] would do, she would tell me. But she will say, 'If you feel that's right for you, then that's fine.'" In this case, although the mother's support was very high and the father's support was absent, the dyadic support was established to be at the moderate level.

Table IV-1. Reported Levels of Pressure.

		<u>Absent</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>High</u>	
<u>Birth Order</u>						Total
Oldest (n=16)						
	Only child	1	0	0	0	1
	Older of 2	3	1	0	7	11
	Oldest of 3	0	1	1	2	4
	Total	4	2	1	9	16
Middle (n=1)						
	2nd of 3	0	0	0	1	1
	Total	0	0	0	1	1
Youngest (n=13)						
	2nd of 2	1	3	2	2	8
	3rd of 3	0	1	0	0	1
	4th of 4	2	2	0	0	4
	Total	3	6	2	2	13
<u>Gender</u>						
	Male	3	2	2	3	10
	Female	4	6	1	9	20
	Total	7	8	3	12	30

A high level of support was identified when the students sensed recognition and acceptance of their efforts and goals along with affirmation, encouragement, and nurturance. Additionally, the interactions with parents were characterized by openness and ease of communication, as described by a firstborn male:

We talk. If I'm feeling stressed out, I can call him and talk to him on the phone. When he tells me it's okay, then I believe it is. That just comes from being close knit. He's my best friend. He says to do whatever I need to do. He tells me to think of the long path when I work at my grades.

A firstborn female appreciated her father's support for her aspirations in journalism. "Believe it or not, my dad, even though he is a doctor, didn't say he wanted me to be a doctor. I guess some people are surprised because all his other children are going to be doctors, and I'm out there in the humanities field." As a postscript, she added, "They do say maybe I should find a nice doctor to marry!" A firstborn premed female noted that her parents "really want my brother and I to go into fields that we're very interested in, because we're going to have a career for 50 years. . . . So they want to make sure that we're happy." Proportionately more males -- six out of 10 males as compared to six out of 20 females -- reported high levels of support. Four of the males were firstborns, and two of the females were firstborns.

A moderate level of support was established when a student perceived parental acceptance and understanding, when the students' performance was less than, or different from, that desired by their parents. For example, a firstborn political science major noted her parents' support: "We wish you could do better, and we know you can do better. But as long as you did your best, it should be all right." Moderate levels of support were described by eight students, one male and seven females; four of the seven females were firstborn.

A low level of support was established when the student sensed support indirectly but with no direct expression. Eight students reported experiencing low levels of support: three males, two of whom were firstborn, and five females, three of whom were firstborn. A firstborn political science/French major, who had been abandoned by her mother, sensed nonverbal support from her father in numerous ways. For example, because he wanted her to adopt the English language quickly, at age five, she was sent to an international school where the education was bilingual English and French; concurrently, he ceased speaking to her in Chinese. She described his nonverbal, indirect support thus: "My dad is really great, but he's not the easiest person to talk to, which I'm sure is typical in Chinese-America. He tried his best to be there. He would make an effort -- he went on a field trip with me."

One male and one female reported an absence of support. The following excerpt describes a female student's longing for support from her mother:

She's not one to listen. She's one to keep talking. If she hears something she doesn't want to hear, she will just say, "Okay, whatever." It really frustrates me. I don't think I have a good relationship with my mother really. I don't talk to her much because everything I say receives negative responses. . . . She doesn't want us to mess with her ideas. . . . It used to scare my sisters and me because my mom was so driven. . . . She'd always have something better to put against me. Even good things that I had to tell her, like I run track. . . and in both my junior and senior year I made it to the state finals. I told her, "Mom, I made it to the state finals!" And she just said, "Oh." It's not what I expect of her. I expect her to be as happy as I was. Even my sisters were screaming, "Wow!" and everything, so [with] my mother, it has to be education. And even then, there's still someone better than me.

In contrast to the levels of perceived pressure in which the sample was equally divided between those who experienced absent or a low level of pressure and those who experienced moderate or high levels of pressure, more students experienced greater levels of support. Whereas only 11 students reported receiving an absence or a low level of support, 19 reported moderate or high levels of support.

Similarly as with the levels of pressure, the four levels of support were collapsed into two categories -- absent/low and moderate/high -- for a 2 x 2 contingency table. A chi square was computed to determine the relationship between support and birth order, but it failed to yield a significant relationship between these two variables, and likewise the relationship of support and gender failed to yield a significant relationship. Table IV-2 displays the support levels as described by the students.

Table IV-2. Reported Levels of Support.

		<u>Absent</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>High</u>	
<u>Birth Order</u>						Total
Oldest (n=16)	Only child	0	0	0	1	1
	Older of 2	0	5	3	3	11
	Oldest of 3	0	1	1	2	4
	Total	0	6	4	6	16
Middle (n=1)	2nd of 3	0	0	0	1	1
	Total	0	0	0	1	1
Youngest (n=13)	2nd of 2	1	1	2	4	8
	3rd of 3	0	0	0	1	1
	4th of 4	1	2	1	0	4
	Total	2	3	3	5	13
<u>Gender</u>						
Male		1	2	1	6	10
Female		1	6	7	6	20
Total		2	9	7	12	30

Levels of Pressure/Support. In addition, each student's levels of pressure and support were assessed in an attempt to determine a relationship between these two

variables. A chi square analysis failed to reveal any significant relationship between these two variables.

As illustrated by the Pressure/Support Matrix in Table IV-3, levels of pressure were not necessarily concomitantly undergirded by comparable levels of support. For example, one student is shown to have reportedly experienced a high level of pressure but an absence of support (Table IV-3, upper right-hand cell), whereas three students reported an absence of pressure but a high level of support (Table IV-3, lower left-hand cell).

The impact of inequivalent pressure/support levels upon the student could not be established. There was insufficient data to determine, for example, whether high pressure with low support was motivating or demoralizing, or absent pressure with high support led to academic mediocrity. However, sufficient evidence from the interviews does underscore the importance of (1) reasonable parental expectations, and (2) adequate support upon the student's overall personal and academic success.

Table IV-3. Pressure/Support Matrix.

		Pressure				Total
		<u>Absent</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>High</u>	
Support	Absent	1	0	0	1	2
	Low	2	1	1	4	8
	Moderate	1	3	0	4	8
	High	3	4	2	3	12
Total		7	8	3	12	30

Parental Strategies for Motivation

Reflecting upon their experiences, the students spoke of the following parental strategies employed for achievement motivation: (1) guilt induction, (2) comparisons, (3) coercion and control, (4) chastisement, and (5) compliments.

Guilt Induction. This strategy was widely reported and proved to be perhaps the most powerful and effective tool; both overt and covert messages were unmistakably received by the students. By the same token, this strategy reportedly created the most distress within the student. A firstborn male recalled that his parents would point out peers that had less ability, and then ask him, "If they get better grades than you, don't you feel ashamed?" Covert but, nonetheless, powerful messages were conveyed when parents invested money in academic assistance such as tutors and review courses. Guilt induction appeared to be a successful tactic, because parental approval remained important to most of the students. A firstborn female expressed her struggle in attempting to reconcile, on one hand, obedience to parents and obtaining their approval and, on the other hand, indifference to parental restraints and subsequent feelings of guilt:

I'd just be really frustrated. I felt such a guilt[y] conscience that I had to obey my parents. At the same time I wanted to do everything everyone else was doing. So I had struggles, every once in a while, and I didn't see any way out of it, because if I did what my friends did and have fun, I felt I wasn't being a good child. I felt really guilty, and I wouldn't be happy anyway.

The sense of obligation to parents was profound. The students repeatedly spoke of their parents' sacrifice for them. A male student stated that he owed his father a doctorate because the father had to terminate doctoral studies when the son was born. A firstborn female, articulating her sense of overwhelming obligation to her mother explained:

The fact that I know she is almost sacrificing her whole life to pay us through college makes me feel like there is just never enough appreciation I can demonstrate for her. There is always more to be shown and demonstrated.

I do see it as an appreciation. I feel like if I do it, she will be happy, because she's invested so much. She always says to me, "Your happiness is my happiness." She even said, "Once you guys have grown up, and hopefully you will have a fiancé, there is no more point in my living. I just wanted to see you guys grow up healthy and happy. That was my purpose in life." Gosh, that puts so much pressure on me!

Comparison. Another pervasively used strategy was comparison of the student with children of friends and relatives. In each case, the purpose was to instill in the student a desire to do better. Yet, this was one strategy that the students found most irritating. Nearly all the students expressed disdain with the "number one topic" at Chinese social gatherings. A junior business major female shared her recollections:

I remember my dad saying as far as Ivy League goes, they were so expensive and he wouldn't pay for any of them except Harvard. I remember being so upset, because I didn't even want to go to Harvard! I didn't even apply there. . . . Because they could say, "Oh, my daughter goes to Harvard." It's something to tell your friends, and that really bothers me. . . like a possession, like a trophy on the shelf!"

Rather than being compared to others, one firstborn male spoke of the pressures of being the one with whom other parents used for comparison. "Even my friends' parents would say why couldn't their kids be like Ken. Then I'd feel I had to do even better."

By contrast, indirect comparisons could be used to the student's advantage. Six of the students cited several factors as contributing to diminished pressure to achieve and/or to pursue a certain career: (1) having parents who themselves had not excelled scholastically or had not gone to college, (2) having older siblings who had not done well, (3) having older siblings who followed parental choice of career, thereby releasing the student from such obligation, or (4) being a later-born child.

A youngest son reported no pressure because the parents had been disappointed in the older siblings. "Out of all the kids, I did best." Another student was relieved in that because her older sibling is pursuing medicine as a career, "I don't have to."

Coercion and control. Direct coercion and control were also employed, but reportedly used much less now than during elementary and secondary school years. Describing the coercion she experienced from her parents, one student declared,

I felt they want me to go to a certain school, do certain things, and I thought, "Oh, my gosh, they can't tell me everything to do! It's my life!" But I think in the end, I picked something in the middle. It's not totally what they want, but I can't always give them what they want.

Chastisement. Another strategy for motivation was the use of chastisement. Fathers were cited as using this strategy more. A firstborn male recollected, "They yelled a lot. They'd reprimand me for things I had even done in high school -- constantly reprimand me." Another firstborn male reported being grounded for an entire month during high school for getting a B. Other students also reported that regardless of their performance, parents still were "never satisfied." "Work harder" was a constant injunction for some of the students.

Compliments. An interesting strategy was the use of compliments. "When I was younger studying for my first honor's certificate when I was five years old, she said, 'Eileen, you will be so successful one day.'" This firstborn female continued quoting her mother, "'I see you in the board room. You will have the same income as mine except with the six extra zeros at the end.' I said, 'Mom! You don't know me, Mom. When I'm in Berkeley, I'm just one of the masses. There is nothing special about me, Mom.' So, she said, 'You are just saying that. You are so modest, too.'" This student proceeded to explain,

Her technique is to make it inherent in me. She told me at one point that "one of the reasons why I say, "Oh, good job, Eileen," or "You are a really excellent daughter" is because she realizes that sort of compliment actually makes me set higher expectations for myself. . . . It is a strategy. It's almost a guilt trip that she puts me on. But she knows that scolding me doesn't do anything to me. It's very destructive for me. But to say that, "Oh, you did a good job this time," or "You didn't do as well as you expected, but it was your best effort," she knows

that I will feel like, "Oh, god, my mom is so happy with this. I can make her even more happy if I tried harder." Yes it does, it does work.

Internalization of External Pressures

A conundrum surfaced in this study. It became apparent with some students, that regardless of any external pressures, intense internal pressures were experienced. Thus, at some point, parental pressures were internalized, and, in some cases, apparently exceeding the original level of pressure. Thirteen of the students, five males, two of whom were firstborns, and eight females, five of whom were firstborn, reported internal pressures exceeding parental pressures.

Most students described parental pressure as lessening considerably upon entering college, but with concomitant internal pressure erupting with greater force. The final years of high school were identified by some of the students as the juncture at which they first began to internalize parental expectations, which in some cases were subsequently exceeded by the students' own expectations. In other cases, however, the progression of this process was so indiscernible that tracing it proved difficult.

There appeared to be strong support from the data for highly driven, perfectionistic traits of the parents to be assumed and internalized by the children. Noteworthy was the reported role modeling by the mother of a firstborn male in this drive toward perfectionism. "I find that I'm more disappointed in my grades than my parents are sometimes. . . . I personally think it's more of an internal drive towards perfection. My parents have always said I'm a perfectionist like my mom."

Likewise, when questioned about the source of his inner drive, a premed major responded that it "came from the example of my parents. . . . After a while though they don't talk to you about school because they know you're going to go the same way.

There's no need to talk about it anymore, because they know that pressure is coming from within now, and there's no need to add to that pressure."

A compelling comment by another male was made thus:

I don't know how to say it. You look when your parents tell you you have to be a professional. You have to go out and do well in school. But it's not as obvious as that. It's more of a general feeling that you have to do well. They don't put direct pressure on you. It's more of an overall feeling -- not only from them though. A lot is internal because you don't want to let them down. If you don't do well, you don't -- I always felt like if I messed up, I was messing up for everybody. There was always a lot of internal drive, a lot of ambition.

Coping with internal pressures was difficult. Some of the students found parents and friends as sources of support and encouragement. The mother of one of the students encouraged her, but without success, to enroll in a less competitive university. In attempting to meet stringent internal standards, the student reported sequestering herself in the library every morning at 4:00 a.m. to study. A male student reported that periodically he became so frustrated that he had to release his frustrations by punching an object. Acknowledging their hard-driven perfectionism, these students nevertheless were finding it almost incomprehensible that it was now their parents who were attempting to help them with pressure reduction!

Comparison of Own Pressure to Pressure Experienced by Friends

An intriguing theme that evolved was a comparison the students made between their own pressure and that experienced by their Chinese and/or Asian friends. The consensus was that despite any family difficulties, conflicts, and pressures that might have been encountered, the students perceived their own parents to be more open and understanding than those of their friends; the students further perceived that they themselves have been able to function more autonomously than their friends. This observation was shared by a number of students, including a female who noted that "... from talking with my other

Chinese friends, I find that their pressures are a lot more harsh than mine are, especially for the males.”

Birth Order and Gender Variables

Another emerging pattern was the relationship between birth order and gender and parental expectations. Nineteen of the students addressed birth order and gender issues. Of these two variables, birth order held precedence over gender for both achievement-oriented and behavior-oriented expectations. Firstborns, regardless of gender, described experiencing higher academic expectations as well as behavioral expectations such as positive role modeling for younger siblings. Career expectations were also more definitive for firstborns, as noted by the youngest child in a family of four children, “My older siblings had more defined expectations for them. My older sister -- I think my father really influenced her -- so she studied engineering like he did, but then in the end, she decided to do economics because she thought it [engineering] was too difficult.”

That parents were more strict in the upbringing of the oldest child was described by firstborns and corroborated by laterborns. One of the reasons cited for stricter upbringing of firstborns was that the parents held unique expectations for them to set a good example and to take responsibility for younger siblings and cousins.

A second-born female reminisced,

When we were all living at home, my older sister would always say, “Gosh, Mom and Dad make it so hard for me. You don’t understand. I have to be the one that confronts them all with these things.” And I think there’s pressure for her to be a good role model for us, and I think there’s probably more pressure on her now to do well.

However, three firstborns believed that pressure also existed for younger siblings because the firstborns had excelled. These firstborns reported feeling sorry for their younger siblings who had difficulty following the high performance of the firstborns.

Supporting this notion was a firstborn premed male, who expressed, "I feel bad for him because I feel they're trying to make him into another copy of me."

On the other hand, gender held precedence over birth order in behavior-oriented expectations but not in achievement-oriented expectations. In terms of academic achievement, there appeared to be no difference in parental expectations for males and females; both were expected to excel. In terms of behavioral expectations, however, a difference was reported. The males keenly felt expectations for caring for parents in their declining years and in continuing the family lineage. Such a sense of responsibility was consistent across interviews, including that of the following student who was not only a firstborn but also a male:

I'm actually the oldest grandchild too. I think my parents want me to be traditional Chinese. . . . And I think it brings additional pressure because we have a lot of--not siblings -- but grandchildren. My grandmother has like 20 grandchildren, so I feel I have to set an example.

Another source of pressure -- pressure to continue the family lineage--was articulated by a firstborn male:

I am the only male in the family, and my dad was the only male in his family, so I'm the last one to carry the family name. . . . It's like there are two goals in my life. One is to get a good job and be financially well off, two is to get married to somebody and then have a male son to carry the family name. . . because the family name is very important.

In response to the researcher's query, "That has implications about who you marry too, doesn't it?" he added, "Absolutely. My mom has made it very clear to me. This person must speak Chinese -- period. My mom prefers me to marry a Taiwanese who is from Taiwan. . . . My mom told me when she had me for the first kid, [she said] 'My burden, my job is done.'"

Behavior-oriented expectations also existed for females, at times resulting in

gender-role conflict. That females were more conflicted found substantial support in the interviews. Females reported considerably more turbulence, particularly during adolescence, in their relationships with parents. The conflicts were described as stemming from culture-related, gender-role issues as well as from normal developmental issues. The pain engendered was poignantly portrayed by a firstborn female:

They were expecting me to be this little weepy, demure girl, very smart but very obedient. I want to be a good daughter, but I can't be all demure and all and lie. . . A lot of it was that I wasn't living up to their standards as their daughter. I wasn't smart enough, bright enough, wasn't a good daughter. . . I never told them personal things. I had a lot of problems with self-image and weight in high school. My parents were really big about that, and I don't blame them, but I don't even think they knew [about anorexia and bulimia].

This student continued to share her pain and anguish of being afflicted with anorexia and bulimia, a condition which, she contended, is common among Asian-American teen-age girls.

Some of the females observed a double standard between their brothers or male cousins and themselves, with the females reporting greater restrictions in dating and socialization. In terms of differing gender-related standards, a firstborn female was wistful in her musings,

I wondered what it would be like to be a son. I wonder if I were a boy, I would have more privileges. I see my cousin, as far as dating, my parents wouldn't let me, but when my cousin wanted to start dating, his parents were all for it. Sometimes I wonder if it's because I'm not a guy.

Progress toward resolution of gender-related conflicts between the females and their parents was reported. The students credited increased maturation as well as increased independence from their parents as contributing to much of the resolution of these conflicts. Another firstborn female attributed her mother's influence as contributing to her resolution of culture-related gender issues. "I was brought up in a different way than most Chinese

women are. I was taught be a leader. . . but also be very proud of my own accomplishments."

Addressing both birth-order and gender expectations, a second-born female summed it up by saying,

I think that maybe Asian parents expect more of boys than girls. I'm not sure, but in general most parents are more strict with their first child than with their second child, and have more expectations of that child than they do of their second child. I think definitely the males feel more pressure.

Ethnic Identity and Acculturation Variables

For the purpose of this study, ethnic identity is defined as the cultural subgroup of a race with which one aligns oneself, and the construct of acculturation refers to the acquisition of the majority's group culture, including its values, ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes, by a minority (Cuellar et al., 1980), although not necessarily at the exclusion of one's culture of origin. Ascertaining the students' own sense of ethnic identity and level of acculturation and their perception of their parents' ethnic identity and levels of acculturation were considered essential for better understanding of the contextual background against which the students' observations, descriptions, and assessments would be made.

For the purposes of this study, the self-designated response was considered sufficient to the query of "How would you identity yourself -- as Chinese, American, Chinese-American, Asian-American, or another designation?" The student was then asked, "Which of these designations would you give to your mother? Your father?" Six students identified themselves as Chinese, compared to 25 who perceived their fathers and 21 who perceived their mothers as Chinese. Identifying themselves as Chinese-American were 22 students, with only three identifying their fathers and six identifying their mothers as

Chinese-American. "Asian-American" was the self-designation of two students, and "Taiwanese" was the designation for two fathers and three mothers (Appendix J).

In addition, levels of acculturation were obtained. Again self-designation by the student of his or her own level of acculturation and his or her perception of the parents' levels of acculturation were considered adequate for the purposes of this study. Each student was asked, "On a scale of 1 to 5, with '1' being 'very Chinese' and '5' being 'very American,' where would you place yourself? Your mother? Your father?" These numerical indices were employed merely as convenient markers and were not intended to reflect a psychometric standard of interval or ratio data. The students assessed themselves to be slightly more American than Chinese, and their parents to be more Chinese than American. All but one of the students scored themselves higher (more American) than either parents; the one student scored herself the same as her mother, but higher than her father.

For each student, perceived mother's and father's acculturation levels were averaged for a "parental acculturation score." The difference between student and parental levels was then calculated. Fourteen students were within one point of parental levels of acculturation, another 14 students were within two points, and the remaining two students were within three points. The males averaged a difference of 1.5 points, whereas the females averaged slightly higher at 1.6 points.

Originally, it was speculated that differences between the students' own and their perception of parental ethnic identity and levels of acculturation would be associated with degrees of differences in expectations. A degree of difference in self- and perceived parental expectations was calculated for each student. Although expectations for achievement were described to be high by the students and likewise perceived to be high of

the parents, the differences often were categorical (e.g., career choice) rather than measurable (e.g., grades). Fourteen reported absent/minimal differences in expectations and 16 reported moderate/large differences. Yet despite the differences between self- and perceived parental ethnic identity/acclturation levels, no relationship between these differences and differences in expectations were found either quantitatively or qualitatively.

Unanticipated was the convergence between the constructs of ethnic identity and acculturation found in this study. Unlike most Asian-American research which encompasses ethnic subgroups, the current study dealt with a narrowly-focused sample -- second-generation Chinese-Americans. Thus, in this study, these two constructs appeared to describe a similar characteristic. Furthermore, the relationship between (1) ethnic identity/acclturation, and (2) differences of self- and perceived parental expectations could not be adequately established because of the following factors: (1) The demographic homogeneity of the sample. By criterion selection, all were second-generation students. Furthermore, all but one was raised in California; and nearly all were from families who were active in a larger ethnic community. (2) The narrow range of ethnic identity and acculturation responses. The majority of self-designated ethnic identity responses was "Chinese-American", and the consistency of perceived parental ethnic identity was "Chinese." The designated acculturation levels were uniformly higher for the students themselves than perceived for their parents. Moreover, self- and perceived parental expectations were described to be uniformly high.

Overall, the students expressed satisfaction with their own level of acculturation and, despite the differences, acceptance of their parents' levels of acculturation. However, during the course of the interviews, evidence of culture conflicts surfaced, some of which have been managed effectively and others which are still awaiting satisfactory resolution.

Differing Parental-Child Educational Expectations

A divergence in parental-child expectations was experienced in the larger arena of collegiate life. Whereas parents held academic achievement as critical to personal success, the students' view of education encompassed a more holistic range of experiences. All of the students articulated their belief that education extends beyond academics, a position not always meeting with receptivity by the parents. A firstborn female assessed her college experience in terms of personal growth in connecting with and understanding people different from herself:

Where I am living right now is a co-op system which is known for its grunginess. It's the students who have come from different backgrounds, who are not part of the elite. . . . All of a sudden, wow, there is this whole world that I don't know about! These whole new ways of thinking. So, I just wanted to be a part of that, to get some more culture. And to understand them. . . . I feel like I've developed a compassion for people, especially people that have to suffer a lot more than I do, and just compassion for people who are different.

Embracing opportunities for co-curricular and community involvement, most of the students reported high involvement in activities that would expand their horizons, such as student organizations, volunteerism, and social and political action. With a more comprehensive view of education, these students reported great satisfaction with their growth toward personal goals. However, parental support for these activities was not always forthcoming, primarily out of fear that personal growth goals would obscure academic focus. A firstborn female biochemistry major spoke of her parents' nagging during her second or third year of college "when I was heavily involved in extracurricular activities; but I just felt that I didn't want my college years to be purely academic. I stayed with my extracurricular even though they did hurt my academics, but I wouldn't have given them up to get straight A's."

As described in the preceding section of this chapter, high self- and parental

educational expectations were revealed in this sample. Although upon entering college, the students reported a reduction in parental pressures for achievement, nearly half of the sample described internal pressures exceeding parental pressure levels. Parental expectations appeared to be undergirded by parental support. Where expectations differed was in the concept of what constitutes "education." Whereas the perceived parental perspective was limited to academics, the student perspective was described as encompassing a broad range of personal growth experiences. These experiences were found to be satisfying and fulfilling to the student but alarming to the parents who feared an adverse impact upon academic achievement. Closely aligned to educational expectations but nevertheless a separate issue were self- and parental career expectations, which are discussed in the following section.

Career Expectations

Students' Own Career Expectations

The students all held high career expectations, including medicine, law, politics, engineering, and business. Career choice was influenced by the following factors: (1) parents, (2) mentors, teachers, and classes, (3) special experiences, (4) religion, philosophy, values, and (5) siblings and friends. For a few of the students, career selection was characterized by a smooth, evolutionary process. More often, however, career selection consisted of considerable exploration and deliberation, and at times involving detours, changes, and conflicts with parents. Eight of the students, in harmony with their parents' desires, have already changed academic majors, with an additional three having arrived at a compromise with their parents. Several others have entertained the possibility that they may not remain with their chosen majors.

Parents. By far, the students were most heavily influenced by their parents. Despite the fact that all but one of the students reported that their parents encouraged them toward a specified career, only six complied with their parents' choice. In a few cases, compromises were made, including a female whose mother permitted her to major in anthropology if she would also major in business. Another female who had enjoyed impressive achievement in music decided to major in business; she envisions working in a music recording company in the future and thereby combining both interests. A female premed major with an interest in art plans to specialize in cosmetic surgery. Some of the students not complying with parental wishes found the process of obtaining parental approval a tumultuous one, the basis of which stemmed not only from cultural and generational differences but also from philosophical polarity. With differing world views, the students perceived their parents to be entrenched in materialistic, prestige-orientated life goals, whereas, the students themselves held more idealistic and "socially-minded" perspectives, which involve social and political action.

A senior female industrial engineering major's choice of career was based upon "just something I enjoy," and not necessarily a prestigious job. She quoted her father as saying that "he wants me to do what makes me happy. . . but his idea of happiness is having a comfortable life and make lots of money. . . but money shouldn't be that important, but to him it's very important."

Describing her father as desiring her to strive for high profile big name and a "fancy title kind of job because he likes to brag," a firstborn female who had changed from medicine and prelaw to economics, contended,

Sometimes he acts like I'm a trophy. . . . I think I've probably disappointed him already. . . . We just don't get along very well. . . . Just my views on the world. He's really conservative and I'm not. Anyone who sets goals for

themselves and can achieve them, I think they are justified in feeling successful. I think my dad thinks that other people have to think they are successful too.

The students themselves viewed financial success and prestige to be much less of an impetus in career selection. Rather, personal fulfillment and happiness and "doing something worthwhile, not money" were cited as being more important. The students further contended that their parents' political naivete, conservatism, alignment with private business, and indifference to social issues were unpalatable. A firstborn female was troubled by

coming to the realization that a lot of Asians just in general in the U.S. are not politically active -- seeing the attitudes of my parents and my parents' friends. This is how my parents take my choice in majors. They say, "That's fine that you want to do political science, but what are you going to do with it afterwards? It's fine that somebody wants to be politically active, but it doesn't have to be you!"

Yet, despite strong parental influences, the students reported a sense of satisfaction and optimism with their final choices; and in those cases in which the final choice has not yet been crystallized, the students nonetheless were pleased with the direction in which they were going.

Mentors, Teachers, and Classes. Fourteen students reported the influence of mentors, teachers, or classes upon their career choice, in some cases impacting positively, such as "I took my first upper division economics class, and I just found I really had a passion for studying it," and in other cases negatively, as in the situation of an aspiring lawyer/politician who originally had taken premed to please his parents, but performed poorly in the science classes.

Special Experiences. Eight of the students reported special experiences which they believed confirmed their choices. One student spoke of his father's illness and subsequent death and the sense of helplessness in "watching him and not really being able to

understand the things that are going on, the feeling of powerlessness. . . . Just standing there and watching made me want to go out and do something. It was really a catalyst for me.” His vow to “do something” led him to aspirations in the field of medicine.

Religion, Philosophy, and Values. Several students spoke of their faith in God and relying on His leading. A number of students spoke of contemplating on the meaning and purpose of life pondering seriously upon their future and what they wanted out of life. As they began to formulate their own philosophy and belief system, their core values affected their career choice. A firstborn male business administration major reflected on his religious philosophy:

I was actually talking about this the other day. About how some of the aspects of looking at ambition kinda conflicts with my religious values. As a Christian, you're not supposed to be self-serving, but other-serving and spreading God's love. The question was think about why we're here. Is it just to become well-paid and live the good life? In a sense, I do believe that I'm not here just for that, and if I don't get good grades that's okay as long as I'm doing my best. With the ambitions, I am still inspired to do something with my life. You can aspire but don't expect it really. If it doesn't come about, that's okay. The Lord has something planned for me, and He'll show me where to go.

Siblings. The influence and support of siblings were marked, albeit in sometimes unusual ways. The decisions of siblings also affected the students, on one hand, creating greater expectations, “My father still complains that he (brother) should go to grad school. He didn't, so now I have to,” or, on the other hand, lesser expectations, “Since she's taking medicine [for a career], I don't have to.” The middle child in a family of three daughters discovered that her older sister's experience was a source of encouragement for her. Her sister, who had wanted to major in art history, did not fulfill her desire, because

My mom had a fit, and said no. She ended up changing to economics with a minor in art history. . . . My mom says now that “Laura is glad I made her do that, because she has a good job.” However, Laura tells me it never mattered what she majored in, because now she's doing banking. . . . She tells me I should major in whatever I want in undergrad and then become more focused in grad school.

Many in the sample discovered that finalizing on a career was not a smooth process. Besides having a multiplicity of interests and abilities, these students cited a number of influences impacting the process of career selection, of which perceived parental expectations were the most weighty. Figure IV-2 shows the factors involved in the student's academic major and career choices.

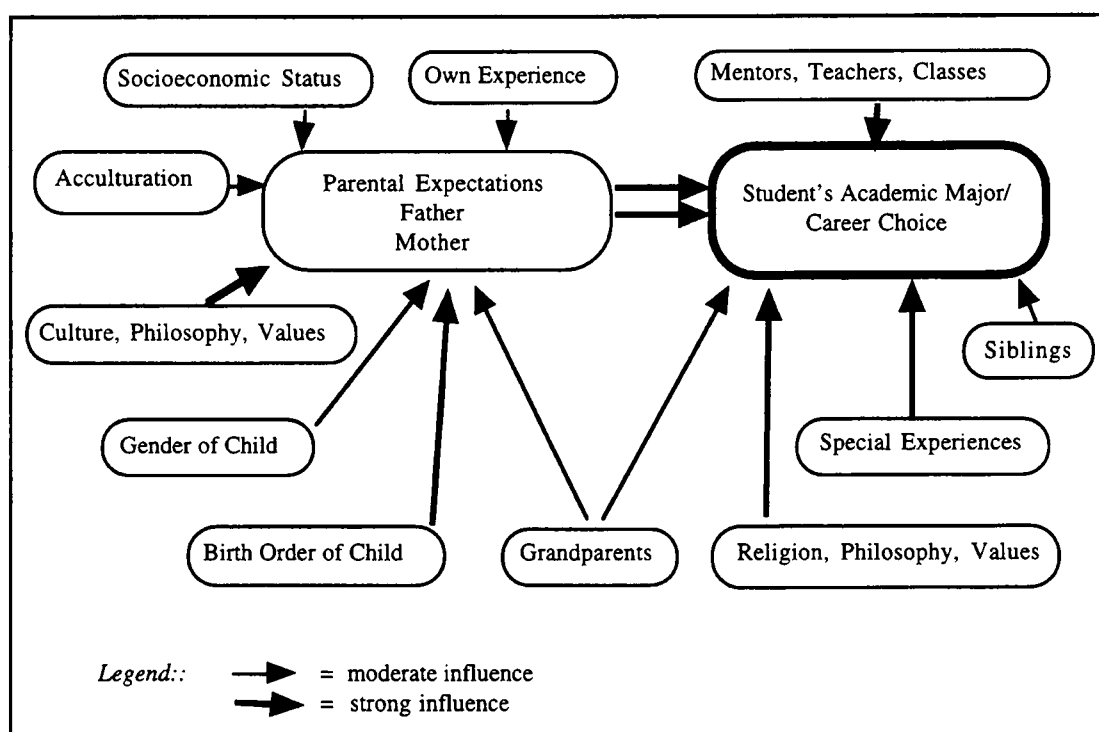


Figure IV-2. Factors Impinging upon the Student's Academic Major and Career Choices.

Perceived Parental Career Expectations

The students reported that their parents' career expectations for them stemmed from several factors, most notably the parents' own experience of struggling in a new country

and encountering discrimination and "glass ceilings," in which advancement up the career ladder was arrested. In an attempt to protect their children from potential hardships, the parents was described as pushing their children into fields that were perceived to provide security in an alien society. Medicine was identified as the best choice, with law as second best. The reasons elucidated for such strong parental aspirations for these fields included (1) financial security, (2) job stability, (3) pragmatism, (4) prestige, (5) independence and control over one's livelihood.

Medicine and Law. Half of the students (15) reported that they had grown up with strong parental injunctions for a career in medicine. Twelve of these 15 students had planned to pursue medicine as a career; however, due to either dislike of or poor performance in science classes or a greater interest in other areas, six of the students decided to pursue other fields. Of the remaining six, four were males, and two were females. Of the four males, three were firstborns, and of the females, both were firstborns. Although the interest of one of the firstborn males encompassed psychology, Asian studies, and art, he envisioned continued compliance with parental wishes in pursuing medicine. "They pay my tuition, and their opinion is important to me. There's some pressure there about that, not waste it on art or something like that."

In a family three daughters, all three experienced pressure to study medicine. The middle daughter reported that her older sister had candidly confided, "I don't know if I'm doing it for myself or if I'm doing it for my parents."

In contrast, a senior architecture major indicated that she may yet go to medical school, although, ironically, her father's expectation is that rather than pursuing medicine, she should find a job, earn an income, and support her younger siblings.

A firstborn male political science and history major reported that he had originally

selected medicine to please his parents. The strong parental injunction had always been, "You want to be a doctor." In fact, he has recollections of a doctor's kit he received from his parents when he was around three years of age; they still remind him of the gift and his early interest in becoming a physician. However, after initial reluctance in accepting the change to prelaw, his parents are now "supportive because it's (law) the other acceptable profession." "The other acceptable profession" was selected by five of the students, four firstborn females and one firstborn male. The firstborn male and one of the females hold political aspirations, envisioning opportunity to provide a voice for the escalating Asian-American population.

Comparison of Self- and Perceived Parental Career Expectations

The students' career selections, although impacted by the aforementioned influences, were described to be based upon idealism as well as personal interest. In contrast, parental expectations were reportedly based more upon pragmatism. Several students mentioned financial catastrophes which their parents had experienced; such experiences, along with insecurities about economic survival in a foreign country, propel parental pressure toward job stability. In a few cases, parents looked to their children for vicarious fulfillment of parental desires, as in the case of a mother who, as an extension of the her lifelong dream, reportedly urged her daughter to pursue medicine .

Effects of Differing Expectations upon the Student

This section of the chapter, dealing with the effects of differing expectations upon the student, is divided into two parts -- expectations which can be measurably defined, such as course grades and hours spent in study, and those categorical expectations which cannot be measurably defined, such as academic majors and career choices.

Expectations Based upon Measurable Differences

In terms of measurable differences, one-half of the sample, which included three males and 12 females, reported difficulty in living up to this type of parental expectations. Two of the males were firstborn, and nine of the females were firstborn. The ensuing effects upon the students may be tracked in a three-stage evolutionary process.

In Stage I (Figure IV-3), the initial effect upon the student may take one of two paths. The student may embark upon the first path -- ignore the differing expectations and follow his or her own wishes. If the results are satisfactory in that the student does not meet with parental objection, no further action is needed, but if the results are not satisfactory, then the second path is taken. Here the student attempts to eliminate the difference by adjusting self-expectations to match parental expectations, by compromising, or by acceding to parental expectations. If the initial difference is eliminated and the student is mobilized toward greater diligence in meeting those expectations and is successful, then no further action is required. However, if unsuccessful in meeting the expectations, the student enters Stage II (Figure IV-4).

In this stage, the student expends even more energy in trying to meet the expectations. He or she may remain in this stage for a lengthy period of time, and may be locked in a "try-harder-but-unsuccessful" cycle. According to a persevering student,

I did try, because I knew my mother wanted me to be better. I did try. I kept trying to meet her expectations, get her approval. I took classes out at JC, I took higher math classes to meet her expectations. But I didn't do very good in them.

I guess I was just trying to find something to do better, and if I couldn't, I just tried to find something to occupy my time.

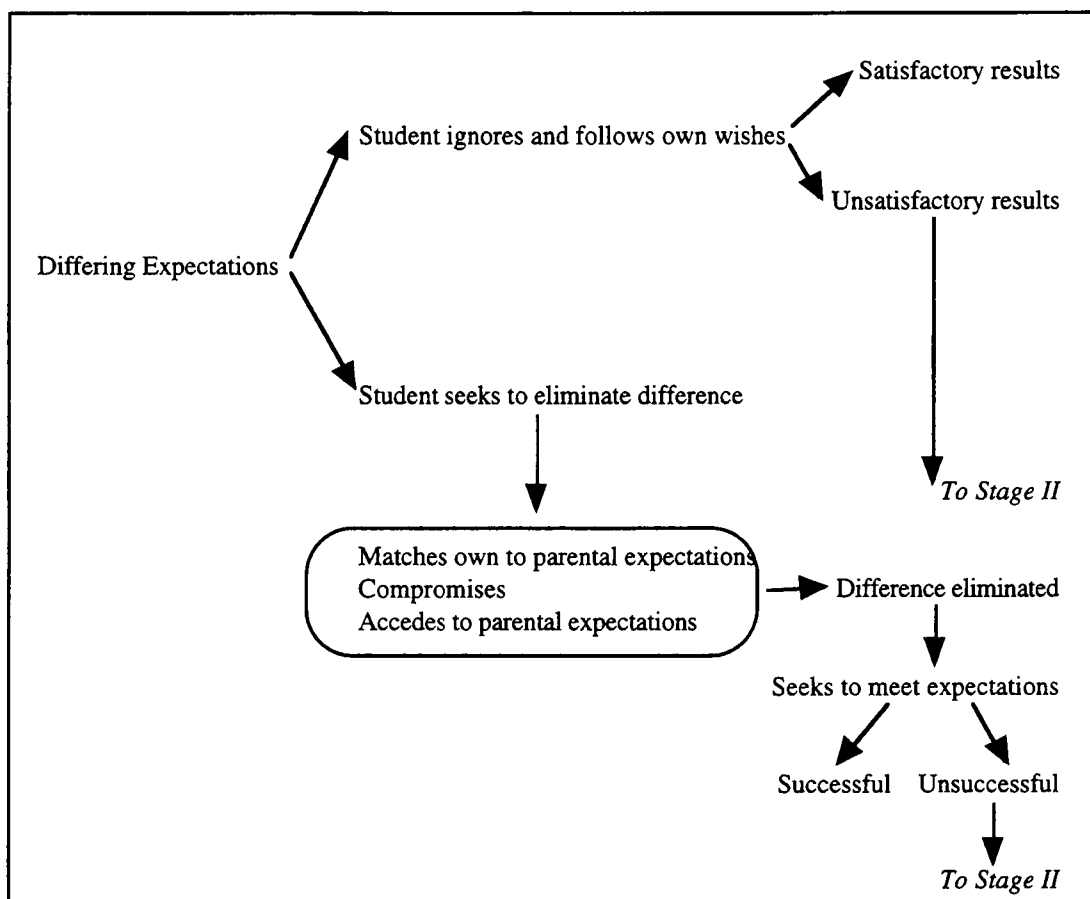


Figure IV-3. Stage 1: Pathway of Effects of Differing Expectations.

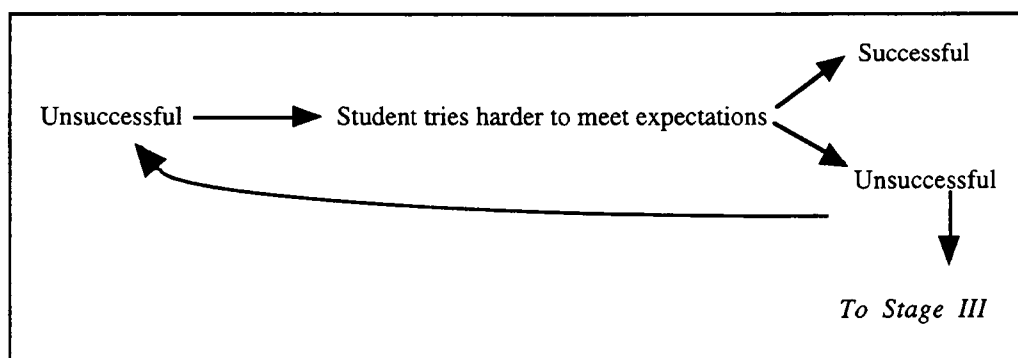


Figure IV-4. Stage II: Pathway of Effects of Differing Expectations.

If unable to break out of the cycle, he or she enters Stage III (Figure IV-5), in which the repeated unsuccessful attempts evoked feelings of guilt and shame, as typified by the following student, "I guess I feel guilty for making my parents kind of disappointed; I feel like kind of a failure." Some experienced a depth of physical and emotional pain. "Sometimes she'd [mother] smack us and be yelling," winced a female business major.

I remember that I wouldn't want my mom to come home, because she'd want my homework to be completely perfect. And if I didn't understand something, she'd give me so many examples and I'd have to do that before I went back and did the question. If I still didn't understand, my mom would always get mad and ask why didn't I understand because it was so easy. I found it -- it always hurt. Whenever I told my mom something good, all she has is something bad to say, but it did hurt, because I did want my mom's approval. I wanted her to be happy for me, and it just didn't seem like she was. . . . I really want to -- to make her happy and meet her expectations. . . . I feel like she puts so much money into me, and if nothing comes out of it, then I'll feel horrible.

The guilt and shame in turn induced one or more of the following internal reactive states within the student: (1) discouragement and depression, (2) futility, and (3) rebellion. A number of students described feeling discouraged and depressed, even to the point of contemplating suicide. Another student described the process of wanting to "give up."

I just freaked out pretty bad. . . . Actually what really happened was I just gave up and it got worse and worse. Instead of working harder, I just started poking and poking and not doing my homework. I was really discouraged.

Four students spoke of frustrations escalating to the point that they would scream, punch an object, or throw a "temper tantrum." Others, primarily during the high school years, rebelled, such as in the case of a firstborn female, who noted that

It got to the point where he [father] would say about everything, "If you don't work harder, you're not going to be able to become President." So at times it became really difficult for me to share what I was feeling with him. . . and I began to rebel against everything. He always wanted me to be the best, and sometimes he pushed me too far.

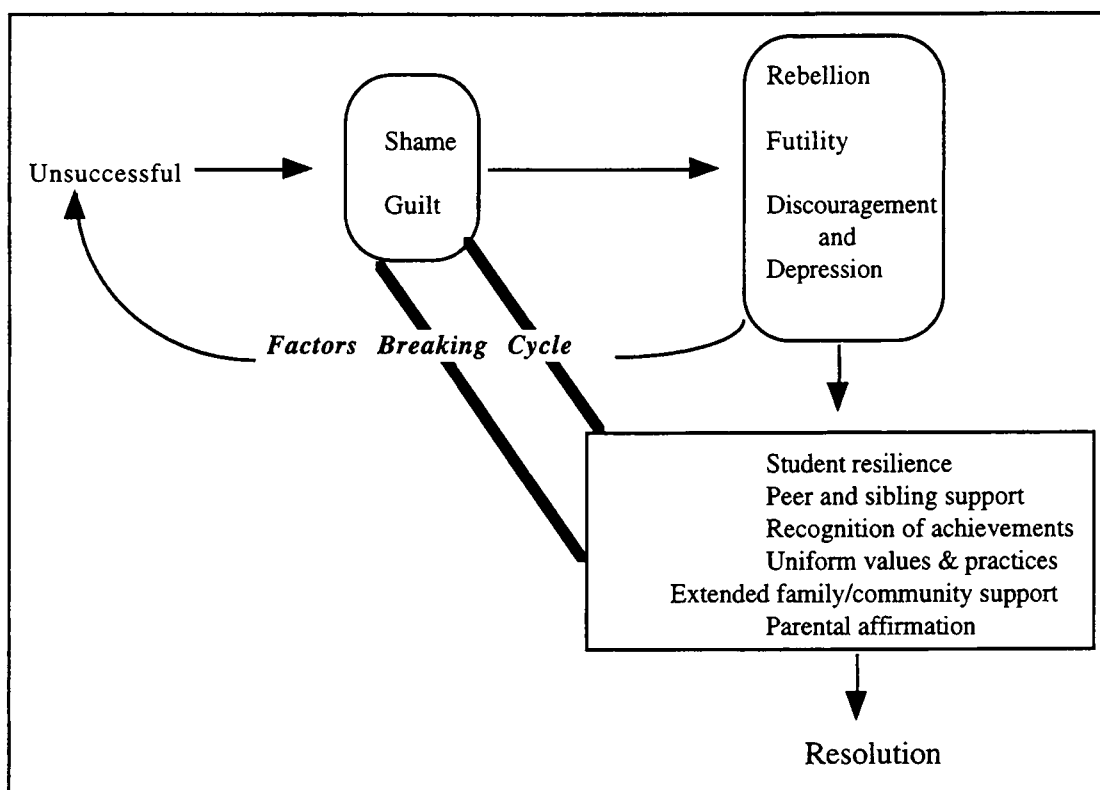


Figure IV-5. Stage III: Pathway of Effects of Differing Expectations.

Although it is conceivable for students to be locked into the cyclic pattern of Stage III, six intervening factors were identified in this study that permitted a trajectory: (1) student resilience and coping strengths, (2) peer and sibling support, (3) recognition of achievements from multiple sources, including family, teachers, peers, (4) family values and practices uniformly consistent with the larger Chinese community, (5) extended family and/or ethnic community support, and (6) parental affirmation of intrinsic value of the child.

At least four out of six of these factors were present in each of the student's experiences. This sample consisted of a group of very bright, capable, and persevering students. The very fact that they had been admitted to a highly selective, prestigious university provided tangible evidence of their academic abilities. This evidence, along with recognition received for achievements both in the educational and non-educational arenas further demonstrated their capabilities. Moreover, all the students reported involvement, many at the leadership level, in numerous co-curricular activities.

Another notable factor was the support of a viable network of mutually supportive Chinese-American and/or Asian-American peers. With most of the families participating in the larger Chinese community, the striking homogeneity of values and expectations contributed to the students' sense of a normative experience as well as ethnic identity. Such a context served not only a source of support but also a standard for consensual validation, whereby the students have the opportunity to check their perceptions, observations, and experiences against the larger reality of their ethnic peer group.

In terms of family relationships, the apparent absence of sibling rivalry was remarkable, particularly in view of differing birth-order and gender expectations. On the contrary, sibling relationships were reported to be close and supportive.

Finally, and perhaps most significant, the students had a profound sense of their parents' love and affirmation. Despite reserved articulation and display of affection, the parents' sacrifice for their children's well-being in terms of not only monetary investment but also time and effort -- all of which were taken to be evidences of their love. Even the student who had experienced abuse made allowances for her mother's behavior and showed filial piety as she expressed appreciation for her mother.

But perhaps most compelling is the following assessment reflecting both

perceptiveness and accuracy: "I think we tended to accept it [high parental expectations] as part of our life. You don't tend to look at it as pressure when it's constantly there. It was only when I realized that other kids didn't have it [pressure]."

Expectations Based upon Qualitative Differences

Subsumed under the rubric of qualitative differences are discreet, categorical differences, such as academic majors and career choices. The effects of these differences upon the student were largely contingent upon parental reaction to the student's selection. Initial reactions of parents reportedly ranged from shock to disgust to acceptance. In some cases, acceptance was forthcoming, whereas in others, opposition continued. Some of the students, anticipating predictable parental reactions, limited the options themselves. "I feel that a lot of those options are not actually options for me because my parents would have heart attacks if I ever said, 'Maybe I will do this.'" Yet according to another student, persistence won out. "When I actually decided to pursue computer science my mom actually stated that I probably could still get into physics/bio major. . . but I just said, 'No, trust me, CS is going to be good. . . .' They've been hearing stories since then and feel better about CS and more confident in what I can do."

Although in some cases, compromises between the student and parents were made, such as parental concession to the student's chosen major contingent upon his or her adding the parent's choice as the second major. In other cases, parental agreement was freely given. The most common parental response was a sequential pattern of (1) disagreeing with the student, (2) questioning the student, and finally (3) trying to convince the student. At this point, the effects upon the student would be the same as described in the preceding section regarding measurable differences, whereby the student followed the same three-stage progression, as described in the preceding section of this chapter. The

The process commences with initial efforts by the student to somehow eliminate the difference. If these attempts were found to be repeatedly unsuccessful according to the student, he or she then experiences feelings of guilt and shame. This in turn creates an internal reactive state of discouragement and depression, futility, or rebellion. The student is locked into this cyclic pattern of effort, failure, resultant feelings and/or behavior, until a break is effected through intervening factors. In addition to the effects of differing expectations upon the student, he or she has characteristic ways of dealing with differing expectations as described in the following section.

Dealing with Differing Expectations

In this study, a pattern of conflict management emerged. This pattern was found to unfold as follows: The student, when encountering differing parent-child expectations, initially attempted a discussion with the parents. Often an agreement was reached, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

Since I've been at college and have been making my own decisions, and I go home and my parents will tell me to be home at 11:30 or 12:00, I just take a second and say, "Maybe this time I'll come home," but you have to understand we've had talks about this a lot and I always discuss this issue, and so sometimes I'll say, "This night I'm going to come home at 1:00 so you guys need to be okay with this, because you have to realize I'm old enough to take care of myself." But I try to resist going out so much when I'm at home, or going out late.

If an agreement was not reached, attempts at negotiation may ensue. "I'd use negotiation. I'd give my side, even if it's not always completely true, it still works out."

The next step involves employing one or more strategies from an intriguing repertoire of strategies developed and refined by the students. Unlike the three passive internal states -- discouragement and depression, futility, and rebellion --induced in Stage III, these strategies are active measures used by the student to deal with differing

internal states -- discouragement and depression, futility, and rebellion --induced in Stage III, these strategies are active measures used by the student to deal with differing expectations. Through practice, the students have crafted these skills and, in many cases, have found them to be effective. The primary strategies have been (1) yielding, (2) outward compliance with covert maneuvering, (3) confrontation, (4) compromise, (5) rebellion, (6) use of intermediary, (7) concealing or revealing *ex post facto*, and (8) ignoring and following own wishes. Figure IV-6 depicts the pathway of conflict mediation.

Yielding

Yielding, which is a form of accommodation to existing realities by which ultimate desirable outcomes may be experienced (Weisz et al., 1984), was commonly practiced especially prior to college. This strategy was practiced even though the student may remain opposed to parental desires. A firstborn female English major related an incident in which "they were auditioning for Joy Luck Club, and they needed people more my age who spoke Chinese. . . . I asked them [parents] to let me do it. My dad wasn't even in the picture, because my mom had already put her foot down. I never auditioned, although I wanted to."

A conscious decision to yield was frequently reported. Often the rationale underlying this decision was that the students, believing their parents to have the students' best interest in mind, relied on parental experience and wisdom. A firstborn conceded, "One thing I've learned is you have to accept your parents, what your parents say. I take their word as well-meaning. . . but certain things I know I can't do and I just say, "Yes, I'll try my best [to follow parental wishes]."

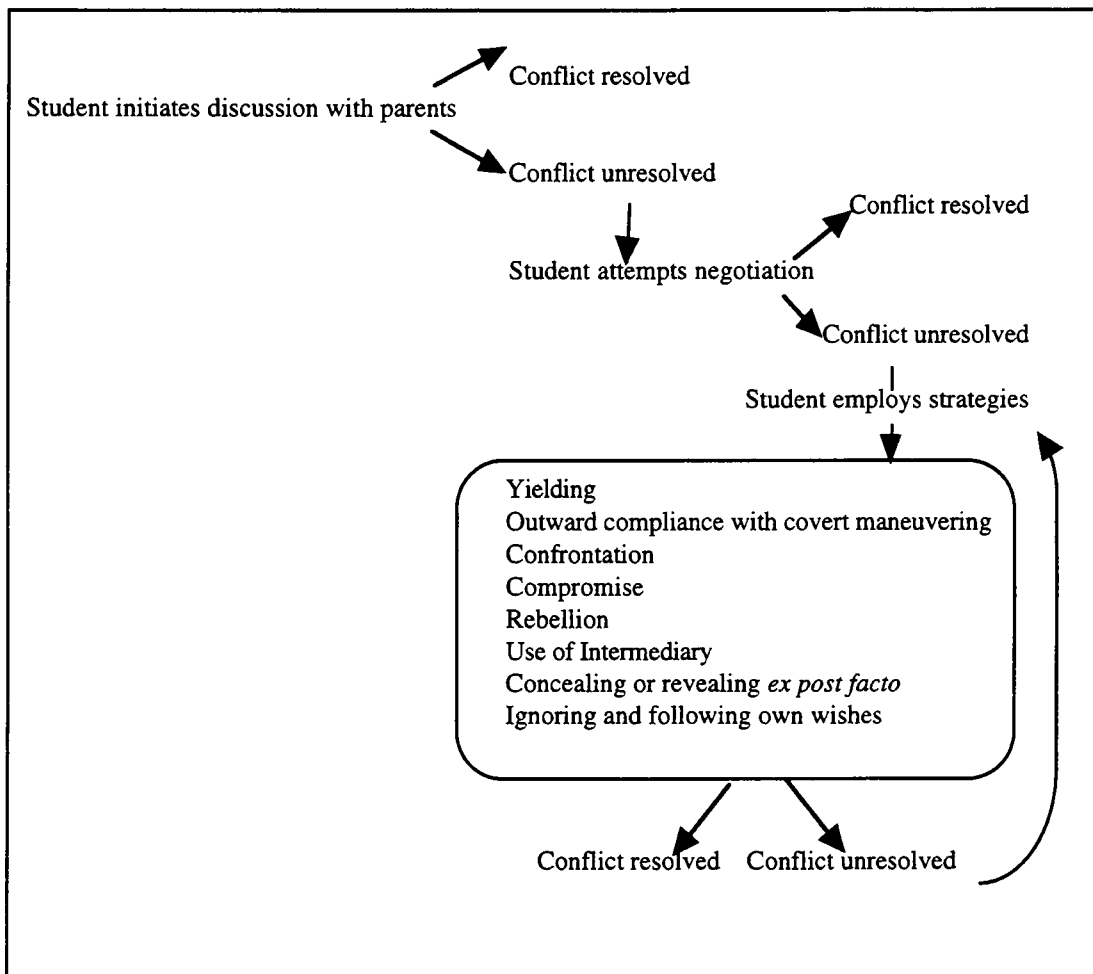


Figure IV-6. Pathway of Conflict Mediation.

Other times, however, the reason for yielding was more complex, in that parental wishes and directives were internalized so that the students found themselves having the same wishes and directives as their parents.

My parents have brainwashed me into wanting what they wanted me to want. I've always done what they wanted. I put a lot of pressure on myself. I always ended up having the friends that my parents liked. They would say about someone else that they didn't like them and thought they were a bad influence on me; then I would feel I didn't like them either.

Compliance with Covert Maneuvering

Overt compliance with simultaneous covert maneuvering, considered by the students as a win-win situation, was employed with conflicts over career expectations and relationships. This strategy permitted the student to appease the parents and accord them authority, but with the student in ultimate control. A female prelaw student planned to use her law degree only as a bridge toward political aspirations. She informed her parents, "I am starting to apply to law schools. I am taking the LSAT in December." They [parents] say, 'Oh, good, good, good!' . . . That puts their minds at ease. . . a pacifier to them. They want me to be a professional, and they want all these good things for me." Another student reported her plans to take the LSAT to please her parents although she has no intentions of pursuing law.

Because of their parents' concern that dating would detract from educational goals, several students maneuvered to prevent full disclosure of the relationship. "It's something I try to keep under cover. I pretend that it's not very serious and don't mention it to my parents very much. . . . If I did, they would realize how serious it is and say we spend too much time together," reasoned a 19-year-old female.

Confrontation

This strategy, reported by three females and two males, was often not effective. Defensiveness and the eruption of strong emotions precluded satisfactory resolution of conflict. One of the males recalled that sometimes a screaming match would ensue, followed by a cooling off period and apologies from both him and his parents.

Compromise

Compromise, when employed, sometimes yielded satisfactory results, such as when the mother of a 19-year-old female discovered the seriousness of a dating relationship. "After she found out, she was very upset and disappointed, but she wasn't unreasonable, and didn't tell me to break up with him. . . She would say not to spend too much time with him. . . She sort of compromised." Another firstborn female affirmed her mother to be compassionate, understanding, and open; however, they generally resolved their differences through compromise, with the student making the bigger compromise.

She says, "I want you to do this, because this is what I think. This is my logic. But you don't want to do it, and you probably have some logic of your own. So, why don't you explain it to me?" So, she will reason with me about things. In the end, there is always a need to satisfy her though. Then sometimes I will compromise my own logic just for her. . . . There is a lot of compromise between my mom [and myself]. Sometimes I feel like I'm making the bigger compromise.

Rebellion

Although intensified by normal developmental manifestations during adolescence, five students, four female and one male, reported rebelliousness during high school, through such actions as disobeying curfew time and through attitudes of defiance and disrespect. In each case, the students now conceded that it was not an effective response toward high parental expectations and behavioral restrictions. The students expressed regret for having caused their parents so much trouble.

Use of Mediation

Mothers were employed to mediate differences between children and their fathers, which was reportedly quite successful. However, the use of this strategy depended upon the conflict, the mother's stance in regard to the issue at hand, the mother-child relationship, and the mother's skill and effectiveness in mediation.

Concealing and/or Revealing *Ex Post Facto*

Six females and one male reported using the tactic of concealing activities not meeting approval from their parents, and two others revealed the activities after the fact. All reported that these tactics were generally effective. For example, a firstborn female related the following:

I wouldn't tell him [father]. I would downplay my roles in different areas, and he knew I was president of Amnesty International, but he didn't know all I had to do for it. . . . I wouldn't tell him about it. When it was all over, I'd tell him, and he would only understand how I completed something, not how much work went into it. . . . It took a lot of time to realize that this was the more effective way to work it out. . . . Before that I had always had to push and shove with him.

Ignoring and Following Own Wishes

The results of using this strategy appeared to provide the most satisfactory results for the students. Ten females, five of whom were firstborns, and two firstborn males followed their own wishes, if they believed strongly enough, rather than accede to their parents.

A female English major believed that many Chinese students are pressured to yield to the parents' career expectations because these students do not believe that other options are available. "They never stopped to think 'what if I did something that I like?' Sure your parents would be mad, but they'll get over it because you're their child. . . . I think a lot of kids don't realize that -- they think you have to follow what your parents say." Yet

despite the bravado, she is still ambivalent about whether or not she should have conceded to her father's wishes in following by his footsteps as a physician. For the time being, she has decided not to acquiesce.

Sometimes following one's own wishes does not meet with adverse parental reaction, as in the case of one student, who claimed that because she was the youngest of four children, her parents are "more resigned to the fact that I'll just do whatever I want."

Student after student verified the college experience as being a major juncture in their lives, with the ensuing experience described as one of greater independence, freedom, and control. Of all the strategies, at this point in time, following one's own wishes appeared to provide the most satisfactory results.

One student concluded with the following admonition:

Always remember when you're growing up, they're not going to be working your job for you. You'll be the one who has to work the job. You owe a great deal to your parents, but at the same time, you owe a great deal to yourself. That's [doing what you believe to be best] what they want you to do.

As evidenced in the preceding section of this chapter, the influence of the Chinese culture figured prominently in the experience of these students. Wrestling with cultural issues which invaded every aspect of their lives including educational, career, and behavioral expectations, the students evidenced growth in their understanding of and increasing ability to come to terms with the issues. Because of the centrality of cultural issues and themes that emerged in this study, additional treatment of this significant topic is merited. To that end, the ensuing portion of this chapter adds a critical dimension by providing an understanding of the students' experience within the context of their culture.

Emerging Cultural Themes

Throughout the history of China, the family has been the central unit of society. In this study with Chinese-American undergraduates in a Western culture, the family still was found to be of critical import. As evidenced throughout this chapter, parents continued to play a pivotal role in the lives of their children. Through the analytic procedure of constant comparison, the parent-child relationship emerged as the core category (Appendix L) of the study and served as the force that gave direction to the child's life.

Parent-Child Relationships

Relationship with parents was reported to have markedly improved since the students' enrollment in college. In describing earlier years, students portrayed family life as close but "strict," with high expectations, the messages of which were communicated both indirectly and directly. For three females, two of whom are firstborns, and one firstborn male, recollections evoked unpleasant memories of such high expectations operationalized with rather physically and emotionally abusive methods. The majority of students, however, reported parental commitment and sacrifice and high expectations originating out of love and a desire for the best for their children.

An emerging pattern was the distinctly bifurcated roles of the parents. Despite recollections that fathers were frequently absent or emotionally distant, their influence was, nonetheless, powerfully felt. Throughout the interviews, consensus was obvious regarding the pivotal role the fathers assumed in the family. Fathers were identified as the authority figure in terms of educational and career aspirations. "Ever since I was little, he's been pushing me to go for it," recalls a female junior economics and business major. "Every conversation we have, it's about school. It's the main topic of our conversation."

Mothers reportedly assumed the nurturing, supportive, and understanding role, and

the children felt more comfortable talking with them. Whereas the father's influence was stronger in terms of education and career and the future in general, the mother's influence was more subtle but greater in the day-by-day experiences. Because the children often were more comfortable discussing sensitive issues with their mothers, the latter served as mediator in father-child conflicts and intermediary in distant father-child relationships:

My mother was very much the person who came, picked up the pieces, and smoothed things over after my father and I had these conversations, which was very interesting because I found out two years ago from talking to my mom that the reason she was like that was because my father felt after he had discussed things with me that I needed my mother to comfort me. . . . My father would tell her to go comfort me, because he knew I needed to be comforted.

Communication. Varying patterns of communication with parents were identified. Students reported the most prominent pattern to be at the cognitive level, with the exchange of factual information. The content was primarily expectation-related, frequently in the form of "lectures" by father. "Whenever my dad talked with me, he always did it lecture style, where he talked and I listened," declared a male, an only child. A female related that "my dad always tells this one story about how when he was growing up, he was number one in his class, and he always said I should try to be that. I said, 'okay.'"

Communication on the emotional rather than on the cognitive level was reportedly sparse. Particularly noteworthy was the reluctance to show deep emotion. Although outward manifestations, including verbalization of affection were generally held in abeyance, a male student, nevertheless, recalled sensing it. "There was a lot of lack of communication at my house, a lot of misunderstanding. They don't really -- they aren't direct with their emotions, like 'I love you,' or 'I'm proud of you.' I don't hear that. But I do feel it." Although direct affirmation of the student was parsimonious, the students nonetheless reported sensing parental love in numerous indirect ways. For example, at

Chinese community gatherings, parents' conversation often revolved around children and their accomplishments, and even though reportedly disdainful about such conversations, the students nevertheless sensed the satisfaction and pride with which their parents spoke of them.

Another prevalent communication pattern was the transmission of mixed messages. Numerous instances were relayed in which parents, on one hand, conveyed strong expectations for their children to pursue a specific career, but on the other hand, assured them that they should pursue their own desires. A firstborn female architecture major declared, "She [mother] definitely wants me to be a doctor, because she keeps telling me to go into premed. At the same time she says to go for what I want."

In a few families, open, genuine communication was reported. A sophomore male described his father as being very supportive and effective in communication.

It's a discussion, not a lecture. He gives us his opinion. He doesn't give it like he's telling us what to do. . . . If I ask what he thinks about something, he doesn't come right out and give us what he thinks. He'll try to open our eyes.

In general, the emerging pattern was movement from conflict and power struggles to growth and increased mutual understanding. The children's subsequent maturation and the parents' increasing acculturation to the majority culture were cited as contributing to the students' changing perspective, which at times was accompanied by remorse for past behavior.

I think since then I've gotten older and I've gotten more mature. . . . I know that they're good parents, and they were just what they thought was best for me then. I was acting really bad, I feel really horrible for being such a rebellious child, because I know I put them through so much pain.

Additionally, life events, such as parents' separation and divorce and students leaving home impacted parent-child relationships. Tracing the change, a firstborn female recounted:

When we were younger, he [father] was very mean to my brothers and I. He would make us do things simply because he said, "Chinese preaches obedience" During the separation [of parents], I left for college, and soon my brothers did too. . . . He started to reassess and look back on his life, what he did. . . . Now, he also realized that we are growing up. . . . The best he could do is try to understand, and just try to support us rather than carrying that stick. . . . I think he cherishes a lot more of the time we have. So, we probably don't even argue even one percent of how we used to! It's really good!

Increased mutual understanding resulted in improved relationships to which the students have responded with enthusiasm. The warmth and closeness in a maturing relationship was poignantly expressed in the following words of an only son:

My parents -- I love them very much. . . . I want to show them both that all the work they did to raise me in the way that they did, all the freedom that they gave me, that they weren't wrong in doing that. . . . It's like my parents have achieved everything they could hope for, except for my dad who wanted that Ph.D. My dad won't say it, but he sees the way I've grown up is more important than any doctorate he could have gotten.

Cultural Identity, Expectations, and Conflict

Culture-bound issues of identity, expectations, and conflict surfaced in this study. Cultural values of obedience, filial piety, and family harmony were reportedly prominent in the families of the students, and they described efforts to reconcile such values with those of the majority culture when at times they collided. Generally such collision revolved around behavioral expectations. Thirteen of the students cited culture conflicts between them and their parents. In retrospect, it was during elementary school that one student became acutely aware of differing parental expectations between her and her friends "in a predominantly white neighborhood where kids could go out to play, and I'd have to go home and do homework."

During high school culture conflicts were conceivably augmented by normal adolescent developmental conflicts. The majority of students reported strained relationships with parents over education and socialization. Points of contention included

grades, college and career choices, Chinese school, extracurricular activities, and social life. In terms of extracurricular activities, all the students had an impressive array of not only involvement but also achievement in music, athletics, student government, and community service. The conflicts centered around the type, extent, and type of involvement, including certain activities, which the parents reportedly maintained must have redeemable value, such as improvement of one's health (certain sports) and increasing one's chances of admission to a prestigious university (music, student organizations, and community service). However, the parents harbored a lurking fear that extensive involvement would defocus the student from academic excellence.

Yet despite, or conceivably because of, high parental expectations, the students sensed love and support from their parents. Powerful messages of parental caring for their children's future and confidence in their abilities were intertwined in the high expectations, which in turn mobilized the children's internal resources.

Grappling with Issues of Cultural Identity. Not surprisingly, issues of cultural identity surfaced in the study. Several students engaged in introspection regarding their bicultural experience. Reflecting on her heritage and what it means to be Chinese-American, a firstborn female mused:

In the Chinese culture, a lot of it is not about individuality. It's about serving the whole, whether it be the family, or in the communist era, it was society. But you are part of a chain. The survival of this whole chain is the greater importance, whereas in American culture, it's about individualism, a voice, personal freedom, self expression. I don't know. It's hard for me to feel like I have a solid concept of what it is to be Chinese-American, because it's just so contradictory. . . .

I think that it's hard in this society right now to create the image of what is Chinese-American, because each person from Chinese ancestry, they take certain parts of the culture with them and leave others behind, so what each person chooses may be different. . . .

Inasmuch as parents desired their children to be a part of the majority culture, they nevertheless entertained fear of their children's loss of cultural identity, cross-cultural marriage, and ultimate dissolution of ethnic lineage. In an attempt to ensure continuation of cultural values and identity in the face of potential extinction by immersion in the majority culture, the parents frequently reminded their children that they are Chinese, simultaneously recounting their own experiences of growing up in Asia and immigrating to the new country, where hardships and struggles had to be overcome.

In her attempt to integrate both cultures, a female student spoke of the parental support experienced. "A lot of the families are very different from mine, because my mother always said to me, 'You take what you can from each culture, from the Chinese culture and from the American culture, so you can become a better person.'" This same student, though, was pensive as she later mused, "Sometimes I wish that I had American parents -- parents I could talk to about the social science theories that I'm learning about."

Consistent with their self-designated ethnic identification of "Chinese-American" or "Asian-American," the students described their attempts at integrating both cultures and forging that integration through various mechanisms, including Chinese language classes, Asian-American studies programs, Chinese-American and Asian-American student organizations, and Chinese-American and Asian-American social and political action in the community. Some of the students resided in Asian-American housing, and nearly all socialized primarily with Chinese-American and Asian-American peers.

Dating and Marriage. A provocative phenomenon emerging from this study was the greater likelihood that parental expectations regarding education and career, rather than parental expectations regarding marriage, would be met. A rigid parental injunction experienced by the students from their early years was that the marriage partner must be

Chinese, but as the children near marrying age, the issue becomes more delicate. When challenged about their decision in the event that conflict arises out of their choice of marriage partner, most of the students "would probably just marry that person." Yet, such a decision could not be made without considerable ambivalence. "It would probably ruin my marriage because I would know she disapproved. But someone else is involved there, and I couldn't go to him and say my mother doesn't like him. . . ."

Less riveting than the marriage issue was the dating issue, for with the latter, both students and parents recognized the transitory nature of dating. However, the students recognized their parents' fear that dating may lead to marriage. A firstborn female political science major described the dating issue as being very sensitive.

Actually I had a racial breakdown of my dating actions from my father: Chinese is always the best obviously. Then I guess the other [is] Asian. Second best, not the best. The next rung on the ladder is, I guess, a Caucasian white person. That is very less acceptable. And below that are just the darker shades of brown. Those are almost not acceptable. . . . He said, "This is the percentage of your inheritance that will get cut out the further you go down the rung. . . ." I must have been no more than nine years old.

It distresses them very highly. As much as I would like to make them happy, and say, "Yes, I will follow whatever you say to the letter," I don't think I can do that. That has become a consistent source of conflict between myself and my parents. It's painful.

Filial Piety. Emerging prominently in the interviews were the students' profound appreciation for their parents and desire to please and make them happy. Especially notable was the tendency to generously grant parents positive attributes. Speaking passionately, a number of the students elaborated on the sacrifice made by their parents and declared their own commitment to their parents' welfare and happiness, and, in the case of males, to care for their parents during their declining years.

Cultural expectations of caring for one's parents were modeled by some of the

students' own parents. A commitment to care for his parents was made by firstborn male whose father had passed away,

In my family, when they came over, they brought their parents. . . . That's just a tradition to take care of our parents as they get older. . . . There's no doubt that my sister and I will take care of my mom when she needs us to.

Role of Grandparents in Intergenerational Families. The traditional Chinese family is intergenerational, in which authority is patriarchal and filters down through a hierarchical structure. Those students whose grandparents lived with the family spoke of their influence, which, although not as strong as in more traditional Chinese families, was nonetheless felt. Although separated by a chasm of generational, cultural, and language differences, the grandparent-student relationship was reportedly characterized by love, tenderness, and respect.

The lingering influence of a grandmother who was described as mean and domineering was nevertheless appreciated by a female political science major whose mother had abandoned the family:

I have thought about this a lot, especially since she passed away during my junior year in high school. I don't know whether or not she influenced my decisions as much as she made me a better person. . . . She was very caring, she loved her family, she was very loyal and dedicated. She gave up her life to take care of my brother and me, when she should be retiring and living comfortably for herself. She did it and she did it for us. . . . She did teach me that kind of loyalty and caring which now is very important to me. . . . She was proud of me that I did well in school and very happy that I had goals of going to Harvard.

Another student paid tribute to her grandmother, summarizing succinctly that "my grandmother is a very, very, very good person, and I love her dearly."

As discussed in the preceding section, cultural values and expectations played a significant role in the experiences of the students. Differences between their own and their parents' values and expectations, stemming from developmental, generational, and cultural

issues, reportedly created, at times, conflict within themselves and within the parent-child relationship. Accepting conflict as an inevitable part of their lives, these students appeared to have learned to cope effectively, as they described ways in which they have developed and refined skills that have worked satisfactorily for them.

Summary

This investigation revealed an extremely bright, articulate, and insightful group of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates who appeared to be functioning at a high level both academically and emotionally. The role of cultural values and parental influence was found to be powerful and pervasive in the experiences of these students.

High self- and parental educational and career expectations were reported. Parental pressure for academic achievement reportedly commenced with the beginning of formal education, increasing to a peak during the junior and senior years of high school, and then decreasing substantially since college enrollment. The sample was equally divided regarding the level of parental pressure reported, with half of the students reporting absent or a low level of pressure and the other half reporting moderate or high levels. Nearly half of the students (13) reported that what originated as parental pressure became internalized to the point of exceeding the original level of pressure. The sample also reported considerable parental support, with more students reporting moderate and high levels of support than absent or a low level of support.

This investigation further revealed strong parental wishes regarding the selection of academic majors and careers. Half of the students reported that they had grown up with strong parental injunctions for a career in medicine. Twelve of these 15 students had planned to pursue medicine as a career, but six of them later decided to pursue other fields.

Law was considered "the other acceptable profession," but only five of the students anticipated selecting it.

In terms of birth order and parental expectations, the findings suggest a relationship between these two variables in that higher and more definitive parental expectations were experienced by firstborns than laterborns. In terms of gender and parental expectations, achievement-orientations were equally high for both firstborn males and females, but gender-role behavior-orientated expectations remained distinctly bifurcated.

In the event of differing expectations, the effects upon the student were found to follow a three-stage progression, which commenced with initial efforts by the student to eliminate the difference. If attempts to eliminate the difference were found to be repeatedly unsuccessful, he or she experienced feelings of guilt and shame. This in turn induced an internal reactive state of discouragement and depression, futility, or rebellion. The student was locked in this cyclic pattern until a trajectory was effected through the following intervening factors of which at least four were present in each of the students' lives:

(1) student resilience and coping strengths, (2) peer and sibling support, (3) recognition of achievements from multiple sources, including family, teachers, peers, (4) family values and practices uniformly consistent with the larger Chinese community, (5) extended family and/or ethnic community support, and (6) parental affirmation of intrinsic value of the child. Due to the homogeneity of the sample, no relationship was found between ethnic identity and acculturation and differing expectations.

The students reported that management of differing expectations initially involved a discussion with the parents which, if unsatisfactory to the student, led to negotiation. If the results of negotiation were unacceptable to the student, he or she then resorted to a

repertoire of strategies, which enabled management of the differences. The resolution of differences which, although not always effective, nevertheless were reportedly to be generally satisfactory to the student. Closure to the conflict was typically made by the student in granting that the ultimate parental goal is that the child be happy and healthy -- a goal identical to the student's own goal.

Because the ultimate self- and parental goals were identical even if the means to that end may differ, the student reportedly felt justified in following what he or she believes to be the best means of goal attainment. The students' capabilities reflected intellectual and emotional resources which appeared to serve them well. Moreover, their flexibility to accommodate multiple expectations from multiple sources, and their ability to be situation-appropriate in terms of operationalizing cultural values contributed to the success with which they negotiated this period of their lives.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates as they attempt to navigate a critical juncture in their lives in terms of making meaning and confronting issues of personal and parental educational and career expectations in American higher education. The primary research question which framed this investigation was "What is the experience of Chinese-American students as they are confronted with self- and perceived parental expectations for achievement in American higher education?" Subsumed under the rubric of this broad research focus were the following specific research questions:

1. What are the educational and career expectations of the student?
2. What are the perceived parental expectations, and how do these perceived expectations relate to the variables of birth order and gender?
3. If the student perceives differing self- and parental expectations, how do the differences relate to differing self- and perceived parental ethnic identity and acculturation?
4. What are the effects of the perceived differing expectations upon the student, and how does the student deal with these perceived differing expectations?

The population under study was a sample of 30 students, 10 males and 20 females at a highly selective, research and doctorate-granting university on the West Coast of the United States. Data collection was through the use of semi-structured, 45-minute individual interviews that were audio recorded and then transcribed. From the analysis of

the data, a number of findings emerged, which are reported in Chapter IV and discussed in this chapter.

This chapter commences with a comparison of the results against the backdrop of the literature, although such comparisons cannot be conclusive because the sample in this study was small and not representative of the larger Chinese-American undergraduate population. Nevertheless, a comparison is merited merely to approximate the fit of the findings against other research. This is followed by (1) a depiction of the emerging portrait of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates as they attempt to make meaning and confront issues of self and parental academic and career expectations, (2) a discussion of alternative theoretical perspectives to explain the findings of the current study, (3) implications of the findings for higher education, (4) recommendations for further research, and finally (5) summary and conclusion.

Comparison of Results against the Backdrop of the Literature

Self- and Perceived Parental Educational Expectations

Consistent with the literature were the students' self-reported high educational expectations and their perception of high parental expectations (Hsia, 1988; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986; Steinberg et al., 1992; Tanaguchi, 1989/1990; Toupin & Son, 1991). Of the 30 students in the sample, 25 (83.3%) plan to pursue graduate or professional school upon completion of undergraduate studies. Nearly all of the students reported that their parents expect them to pursue graduate or professional studies; this corroborates with the findings of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), in which nearly 96% of the parents of second-generation Asian-American middle school students expected them to pursue graduate or professional studies (Chen, 1996).

This study also is consistent with extant research which has consistently shown a positive correlation between high expectations and high achievement (Campbell & Mandel, 1987; National Center for Education Statistics, 1993; Pang, 1991; Peng & Wright, 1994; Schneider & Lee, 1990). Likewise finding substantial support was the students' report that their parents attribute academic success to student effort and diligence rather than to ability or difficulty of the task, and that their parents tend to be less satisfied than Caucasian parents with their children's academic performance (Holloway et al., 1986; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Stevenson & Lee, 1990).

A partial explanation of the parental attitude toward the importance of effort rather than ability in academic success may be found in the educational socialization of the parents, many of whom immigrated from Taiwan, where they had experienced a highly competitive educational system. The dreaded government examinations at critical junctures largely determined the students' future, including the school to be attended and the course of study to be undertaken. In such an environment where an individual has limited control over his or her future education and career, one of the few areas in which his or her future can be impacted is through diligence in studies. Beginning with kindergarten, children accept after-school tutoring as the norm.

Birth Order and Gender. In terms of these two variables, an unanticipated but compelling phenomenon that emerged was that birth order had precedence over gender in both achievement-oriented and behavior-oriented expectations. Firstborn females as well as males were held to higher standards of achievement. Career expectations were also more definitive for firstborns, regardless of gender. That parents were more strict in the upbringing of the oldest child and held him or her to a higher standard of behavior was reported by firstborns and laterborns. Higher expectations occurred even in cases in which

the firstborn was a female and laterborns were males, a phenomenon described by both firstborns and laterborns.

However, despite high expectations for firstborns, a relationship between birth order and emotional distress was not observed. This finding is inconsistent with Newman, Higgins, and Vookles' (1992) research that suggests that although firstborns showed fewer self-discrepancies (discrepancies between their own and perceived significant others' expectations and standards), the discrepancies were more highly correlated with emotional distress than those of non-firstborns.

In terms of career choices, many of the females in this study selected nontraditional gender careers. Medicine, law, engineering, and political science were among the careers toward which the females aspired. This corroborates with extant research that suggest that Asian-American females are more likely than Caucasian females to enter such occupations (Campbell & Connolly, 1987; Leung et al., 1994). On the other hand, gender held precedence over birth order in certain behavior-oriented expectations but not in achievement-oriented expectations. In terms of academic achievement, both males and females were expected to excel, which supports Campbell et al.'s (1984) findings that suggest no gender difference in parental expectations. In terms of behavioral expectations, however, a difference was reported. Traditional gender-specific behavioral expectations were found for males to provide for parents in their declining years and to continue the line of progeny and for females to "act ladylike" and not "get too muscular." Social restrictions regarding dating and curfew were also more stringent for females.

Ethnic Identity and Acculturation. The relationship of ethnic identity and acculturation to self- and parental differences in expectations could not be established because of the homogeneity of the sample in terms of generational status and self- and

perceived parental ethnic identity and levels of acculturation. The findings of this study appear to suggest that ethnic identity and acculturation were measurements of the same construct. Unlike many Asian-American research, in which the sample consists of multiple ethnicities and varying levels of acculturation, the current sample was uniformly second-generation Chinese-American. Furthermore, self- and perceived parental expectations were consistently high. Thus, the homogeneity of this sample precluded association of ethnic identity and acculturation to parental expectations.

Pressure and Support. A high level of self- and perceived parental expectations was described. The sample was equally divided between high/moderate and low/absent levels of pressure. The large number of students reporting low or absent levels (eight and seven respectively) stands in contrast to the stereotype of hard-driven Asian-American families. In fact, high parental expectations may indirectly transmit strong messages of parental belief in the inherent value of the child and confidence in his or her abilities.

The findings also suggest a birth order effect related to pressure. Whereas nine of the 12 reporting a high level of pressure were firstborns, only two of the seven reporting an absence of pressure were firstborns.

Another finding was the sense of support the students experienced from their parents. In contrast to the levels of perceived pressure in which the sample was equally divided between those who experienced absent or a low level of pressure and those who experienced moderate or high levels of pressure, more students experienced greater levels of support. Whereas only 11 students reported receiving an absence or a low level of support, 19 reported moderate or high levels of support. Thus the emerging picture portrayed generally greater levels of support than levels of pressure.

Although parents were reportedly parsimonious in verbal expressions of support or

affirmation, which again corroborates with the literature (Mardkowitz & Ginsburg, 1987; Tanaguchi, 1989/1990), a deep sense of love, commitment, and support was nevertheless felt in numerous tangible and intangible ways. For example, students sensed love and affirmation as they overheard their parents with pride talking about them at social gatherings. The students also described financial sacrifices made for their education. Tutors, review sessions, special courses, music and dance lessons, private schools, and other opportunities were afforded the students. Thus the high expectations often were found to be simultaneously undergirded by support, which originated not only from the parents but also from teachers, siblings, friends, extended family, and ethnic community, as well as from tangible evidences of recognition and achievement. Such non-Western expressions may have been entirely missed in a quantitative study using Western measures of support, but the semi-structured interviews provided a latitude of response in which forms of support could be identified and extrapolated.

Differing Expectations. Incongruencies surfaced in this study, however, between self- and perceived parental expectations. Points of departure were found in the perception of "educational" expectations. Students uniformly conceived of a broader notion of education as extending beyond the classroom to co-curricular activities. In contrast, parents reportedly feared that such activities would only serve to compete with education, which they conceived to be exclusively synonymous with academics.

Another point of departure was the political/philosophical polarity between the students and their parents. The students perceived their parents to be conservative and indifferent to social and political issues, whereas they viewed themselves to be liberal as they actively engaged in social and political action. However, unlike the era of the late 1960s and 1970s, when the prevalence of such involvement was for the purpose of

collective consciousness raising, the involvement of the current sample appeared to be more for the purpose of personal fulfillment and satisfaction. Sue and Sue (1972) observed that the Chinese who identifies with the Asian-American designation (as opposed to the traditionalist whose maintains a tenacious grip on the culture of origin or the marginalist who functions in periphery to both cultures) attempts to

preserve certain Chinese values in the formation of a new identity. He feels that complete obedience to traditional values limits his self-growth. Self pride cannot be attained if his behaviors are completely determined by his parents or by society. Parental emphasis on high achievement is too materialistic for the Asian-American who is trying to find meaning and self-identity. In addition, his political and social awareness is more fully developed. . . . Problems such as poverty, unemployment, individual and institutional racism, and juvenile delinquency are of primary concern to him. . . . Emphasis is placed on raising group esteem and pride, for it is only through collective action that society's perception of the Asian-American can be efficiently altered (p. 117).

However, in the present sample, only two students identified themselves as Asian-American, in contrast to 22 who identified themselves as Chinese-American and six as Chinese. The researcher speculates that the small number identifying themselves as Asian-American was due to a differing sociopolitical climate. In contrast to the 1960s and 1970s when the collective Asian-American identity erupted in an effort to unite the various Asian ethnic groups to intensify solidarity in political action, current students seem to be returning to claim their subgroup identity of Chinese-American. The researcher of the current study further contends that the need to claim the subgroup identity arises in part from the proliferating Asian-American population, with massive increases from Southeast Asia, resulting in greater diversity among the various subgroups. Similar to the students in the 1960s and 1970s, the current sample continued the altruistic desire to address sociopolitical issues and to promote common good, but now with a definitive Chinese-American rather than an Asian-American identity. Thus the description of Asian-Americans in the above

passage may remain accurate, but its applicability to the subgroup identity of Chinese-Americans may be made.

Self- and Perceived Parental Career Expectations

The career expectations and preferences of the sample in the current study contradict Leong's (1991) findings which suggest that Asian-American undergraduates exhibit higher levels of dependent decision-making styles and lower levels of career maturity (deference of decision-making responsibility outside of oneself) than Caucasian students. On the contrary, despite the fact that all but one of the students in the current investigation reported that their parents "steered" them toward a specified career, only six totally complied. The remaining students exercised self-initiated, rather than parent-extended, autonomy in career selection. In the event of parent-child conflict over career choice, the students used various strategies of conflict management.

Several explanations are advanced regarding the described autonomy of the students. That the students were able to exert autonomy through the use of these strategies is seemingly more characteristic of the independent Western culture rather than the Chinese culture and inconsistent with cross-cultural studies. However, much of the Asian-American research on interdependence has been based upon the Japanese culture, which differs from the Chinese culture in that the latter is less nationalistic and more kinship oriented. Through centuries of continuous civil strife, China's historical provincialism is evidenced by its sociopolitical, cultural, and linguistic differences. Thus, the sense of solidarity of the family as an autonomous unit, separate from the larger society, is inculcated in the children. Within the family, the children are expected to maintain harmony, but outside the family, the children are expected to exhibit independence and

autonomy. Thus the children are simultaneously socialized toward interdependence in kinship relations and independence in the larger society, so that competence in both cultures may be developed (Lin & Fu, 1990).

Another explanation is LaFromboise and associates' (1993) model of bicultural competence. The individual with bicultural competence possesses bicultural efficacy, which is defined as the ability to engage in appropriate situation-specific behavior. The findings of the current study appear to support the presence of this ability in these students, not only in terms of career selection but also in terms of the effective management of bicultural expectations.

Contradicting previous research findings indicating that Asian Americans cluster in the fields of natural sciences and mathematics (Hsia, 1988; Leung et al., 1994; Sue & Kirk, 1972; Suzuki, 1983; Toupin & Son, 1991), the current study revealed only nine students selecting those fields, with the remaining 19 in business, social sciences, and humanities, and two undeclared.

Moreover, in terms of the students' career expectations, the primary hypotheses reported in the literature for career preference -- racism issues, personality structure, prestige, and "glass ceiling" -- were not supported in this study. In fact, the current findings revealed 19 students aspiring to enter highly competitive fields, including political science, business, and mass communication, all of which require forceful communication and interpersonal influence. Furthermore, throughout the interviews all but one of the students demonstrated an enviable level of verbal ability, language fluency, and expressiveness. Likewise, all but one of the students were extremely articulate, spontaneous, clear, and organized in their communication. It must be remembered, however, that this sample consisted of intelligent, unusually articulate undergraduates at a

highly selective university. In terms of prestige, indeed it was reported to be a major point of contention between the students and their parents. Inasmuch as the students recognized the importance of prestige to their parents, the students themselves held this variable as not only insignificant but disdainfully so. Likewise, neither racism nor the "glass ceiling" were important considerations. Thus, this sample demonstrated a high level of autonomy based upon personal interest in the process of career selection .

Effects of Differing Expectations

In this study, several findings regarding differing expectations emerged. First of all, a pattern evolved in which the student's response to high parental expectations resulted in a process whereby external expectations became internalized, with the subsequent intensity exceeding the original, resulting in high achievement.

But beyond high performance outcomes, other effects were uncovered in this study. Half of the students reported difficulty in living up to parental expectations. The effects of these high expectations upon the student played out in a predictable, three-stage process, involving a dynamic interplay between effects upon the student and his or her attempts to eliminate these differences. The student initially attempted to eliminate the difference in expectations, followed by greater effort to meet the expectations, which if unsuccessful, evoked feelings of guilt and shame. This vulnerability to guilt and shame has been traditionally used as a behavioral leverage by Chinese parents to socialize their children (Sue, 1973). With the current sample, these feelings of guilt and shame in turn induced an internal reactive state of discouragement, depression, futility, or rebellion, continuing in a cyclic fashion until intervening factors effected a trajectory.

The following intervening factors were identified: (1) student resilience and coping strengths, (2) peer and sibling support, (3) recognition of achievements from multiple

sources, including family, teachers, peers, (4) family values and practices uniformly consistent with the larger Chinese community, (5) extended family and/or ethnic community support, and (6) parental affirmation of value of the child.

At least four out of six of these factors were present in each of the student's experiences. The students demonstrated a high level of functioning, not only cognitively but also emotionally. No antisocial behavior was reported, except for one student, who reported cheating on a test during his junior year in high school, the experience of which subsequently proved to be valuable in his personal growth. Throughout secondary school, although at times embroiled in parent-child conflicts, nearly all the students reported that they were able to cope adequately, maintain high levels academic achievement, and engage in numerous co-curricular activities, many of which were at the leadership level. The very fact that these bright students were admitted to a highly selective, prestigious university further provided tangible evidence of their success. This evidence, along with recognition received for achievements both in the educational and non-educational arenas, further demonstrated their capabilities.

Another notable factor was the support of a viable network of siblings and peers. The reported absence of sibling rivalry was remarkable, particularly in view of differing birth-order and gender expectations and restrictions. In fact, sibling relationships were described as quite close and mutually supportive.

With most of the families participating in the larger Chinese community and with the students having Chinese-American and/or Asian-American peer groups, the striking homogeneity of values and expectations contributed to the students' sense of a normative experience as well as ethnic identity. Such a context serves not only as a source of support but also a standard for consensual validation of the normalcy of the experiences.

The value of close ties with the Chinese community as a factor in breaking the aforementioned cyclic pattern is substantiated by the literature on cultural groundedness -- the identification and social support network one has in one's culture of origin. Being grounded has been found to enhance effective coping with the psychological impact of entering a new culture while simultaneously facilitating the acculturation process (Beiser, 1987; Palinkas, 1982; Porte & Torney-Purta, 1987).

Finally, and perhaps most significant, the students reported a profound sense of parental love and affirmation. Despite reserved articulation and display of affection, the parents sacrificed for their children's well-being, often investing much money, time, and effort for their education -- all of which were interpreted as tangible evidences of their love. Even a student who had reported abuse made allowances for her mother's behavior and expressed appreciation for her.

Management of Differing Expectations

Management of differing expectations also followed a predictable pattern. The initial attempt at reconciliation was reported to be engagement of the parents in discussion. If satisfactory resolution was not forthcoming, the student then attempted negotiation. If the results of negotiation were found to be unacceptable, the student moved to the next step, which entailed employing a strategy from the following repertoire: (1) yielding, (2) compliance with covert maneuvering, (3) confrontation, (4) compromise, (5) use of mediation, (6) hiding and/or telling after the fact, and (7) ignoring and following own wishes.

Although the vacuity in the research literature regarding this topic precludes any comparison, examining these strategies within a cultural context may illuminate their appropriateness and usefulness. The dynamics of context-bound strategies for maintaining

control are beyond the scope of this study. However, suffice it to say that collectivistic cultures contain a complexity of interpersonal relationships that tend to elude the Western mind. Conflict is covertly manifested, and control is indirectly expressed. The strategy of yielding, for example, appears to be a losing proposition for the one who yields and, therefore, not a desirable tactic. Thus yielding or submitting to parental educational or career expectations may be viewed as evidence of weakness or delayed development of autonomy. Yet this strategy is consistent with a collectivistic culture in which the individual *accommodates* to existing reality (Kojima, 1984). Rather than the loser in the conflict, the individual may ultimately achieve the desired results. Another strategy commonly employed in collectivistic cultures is mediation, in which a third party intervenes and thereby facilitates the desired outcomes without risking one's vulnerability to "loss of face." Such cultural norms stands in stark contrast to Western methods of control in which one attempts to *directly influence* existing reality.

In the current study, yielding and the use of mediation were strategies reportedly more prevalent prior to college -- a time when the child was under more parental authority and Chinese cultural norms. The students reported consciously yielding even though opposition to parental directives remained. Strategies of more direct control such as confronting, ignoring and following one's own wishes were utilized to a greater a degree as the students entered college.

Effectiveness in Coping. An intriguing finding in this study was that students appeared to be coping effectively. Conspicuously absent was evidence of undue psychological distress. Despite the fact that the researcher had addressed the possibility that in the course of an interview a student may manifest problems requiring referral for mental health counseling and had further delineated specific measures for intervention in

case of such an eventuality, the researcher failed to detect any evidence that any of the students was currently experiencing unmanageable difficulty. The students' coping strategies appeared to be serving them effectively. Although nearly all described culture conflict and parent-child conflict, particularly severe during high school, it appeared that much of the conflict was exacerbated by normal developmental issues. Current sources of stress were identified by the students as stemming from the rigors of this first-rank university and from internal, rather than from parental, expectations .

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that despite high external and internal expectations and despite differences in expectations, the sample portrayed a healthy, satisfied, high performing group of undergraduates. These findings, interestingly, are strangely reminiscent of the "model minority" stereotype of the high-achieving, problem-free Asian-American, which was shattered by subsequent research findings consistently suggesting that significant mental health problems do exist (Leong, 1986; Sue, 1992).

Because the findings relative to effects of differing expectations upon the students in the current study do not corroborate with reported research literature, in an effort to understand the findings, various factors to account for them were entertained. First of all, in terms of respondent honesty, there was no indication that the students did not speak with candor. Secondly, the selectivity of the university and the voluntary nature of participation in the study may have yielded a sample that was unrepresentative in that the subjects were bright, capable, and cognitively and emotionally well-integrated. Thirdly, because many of the previous investigations used paper and pencil instruments such as questionnaires which accommodate only limited range of response, a plea for judicious interpretation of the

results must be made. Even though the participants in those investigations may have had sufficient language fluency, measurement problems must nevertheless be considered.

Unfortunately, cross-cultural psychology has not always taken sufficient precaution in interpreting task performance and behavioral variations across cultures. Furthermore, many of the cross-cultural studies comparing personality traits used U.S. norms as the benchmark for normality, so that Asian Americans' lower score on self-esteem, for example, would not necessarily mean that they actually have lower self-esteem, but, rather, that abasement is a cultural trait that is highly valued. There is ample evidence (Huang, 1981; Uba, 1994) suggesting Asian behavior to be more context dependent, which would make a questionnaire item such as "I am outgoing" difficult for an Asian to respond; he/she may be "withdrawn" in the classroom by Western standards but extremely outgoing with friends. An additional consideration is that whereas many personality traits are attributed to culture, they may actually be adaptational measures of minority status in society. Thus, a caveat must be issued for researchers to guard against inaccurate explanations and cultural bias.

The search to discover possible reasons for the divergence of the reported research and the findings of the current study led the researcher back to the original contextual backdrop, the individualism-collectivism model (Hofstede, 1980), in an attempt to discover its appropriateness for this study. Even though enjoying extensive use by a broad spectrum of disciplines, this model has undergone criticism for being either too abstract (unidimensional) or too specific (multidimensional). According to Chen, Meindl, and Hunt (1997), individualism-collectivism research has been weak in conceptual specification of the construct. As a consequence, the authors have conceptualized individualism-collectivism as bidimensional, with the horizontal axis designating personal relations

(person to person) and the vertical axis designating organizational relations (person to the collective). Triandis (1985, 1995) formulated the constructs of allocentricism and idiocentrism which, on the psychological level, correspond to individualism and collectivism on the cultural level. However, even with the additional dimension to the individualism-collectivism model, it was still considered deficient in explanatory value for the findings of the current study.

Throughout the interviews, the dominant role of culture was reported in the experience of these students. Because of the complexity of the intricate interplay of dynamics operative in the integration of two sharply divergent cultures in the experience of the current students, a more adequate explanation of the findings necessitated an eclectic perspective. In the search for alternative theoretical perspectives, the bicultural competence model (LaFromboise et al., 1993) and the intercultural development model (Bennett, 1993) were discovered to have, at this point in time, the most appropriate and comprehensive explanatory value for the findings of the current study.

Bicultural Competence Model

The bicultural competence model was developed from second-culture acquisition phenomenon. Five models have been advanced to understand the process of second-culture acquisition: (1) assimilation, (2) acculturation, (3) multicultural, (4) fusion, and (5) alternation (LaFromboise et al., 1993). The assimilation and acculturation models both emphasize a hierarchical as well as a unidirectional relationship between two cultures. Thus the outcome of such a process is acquisition of a new identity at the cost of the culture of origin. The multicultural model promotes maintaining distinctiveness of the various cultures but with multifaceted and multidimensional institutional sharing among them, and the fusion model is based upon the assumption that cultures in sharing of institutional

structures will produce a "melting pot" culture.

Inherent in the alternation model, on the other hand, is a bidirectional and orthogonal rather than a unidirectional and hierarchical relationship between the two cultures. Thus both cultures may be viewed as equal in value even though the individual may have a preference of one over the other. Moreover, the model posits that it is not only possible but also desirable for a minority to understand and participate in both cultures without having to choose between them. Instead, the individual is free to choose the degree and manner of affiliating with each culture and to move in and out alternately, and consequently, experiences less stress than those undergoing assimilation or acculturation.

Drawing from the alternation model, LaFromboise et al. (1993) developed the bicultural competence model. Unlike the individualism-collectivism model (Hofstede, 1980), independence and interdependence are not conceptually dichotomized, but rather are conceptualized as two distinct dimensions within which an individual can function effectively. The basic assumption is that individuals possess the ability to participate appropriately and comfortably in two different cultures, without sacrificing one for the other. Based upon an exhaustive review of the literature published since 1929 on the psychological impact of biculturalism, LaFromboise et al. (1993) found that a common assumption of biculturalism is that it is psychologically undesirable because it generates ambiguity, identity confusion, and normlessness.

Most of the models assume that loss of identification with the culture of origin is a consequence of second-culture acquisition, a process that may be stressful, but LaFromboise and associates' (1993) review of the literature supports the position that through socialization in the culture of origin, a child develops personal and cultural identities and competence in that culture. Then as he or she enters the second culture, the

intuitive, emotional, and cognitive experience is maximized. The greater the maintenance of effective relationships with both culture through alternation, the greater the likelihood of bicultural competence and subsequent emotional well-being.

Moreover, bicultural competence fosters positive personal and achievement outcomes. A bicultural person possesses a strong sense of self as well as self-in-relation-to-others. Within this framework, personal achievements are valued perhaps even more highly to the extent that they bring honor to the entire family (Lew, 1994; Lin & Fu, 1990). Research studies with Korean-American high school students (Golden, cited in LaFromboise et al., 1993) and Hispanic youth (Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980) suggest greater educational and personal outcomes for biculturally, rather than monoculturally, competent students.

By adopting bicultural values, these individuals can achieve competence in both cultures and develop of an impressive repertoire of skills, so that achievement styles are multifaceted. The key, asserts LaFromboise et al. (1993) is the ability to develop and maintain competence in both cultures. The development of bicultural competence is facilitated by several factors: (1) positive attitude and respect toward both groups, (2) bicultural efficacy, (3) bilingualism, (4) role repertoire, and (5) groundedness.

In terms of the first factor, positive attitude and respect toward both groups, the individual's attitude affects his or her level of motivation for development and maintenance of identity and involvement and competence in both cultures. The second factor delineated is bicultural efficacy -- the confidence of one's ability to live effectively within two groups without compromising cultural identity. This is essential as one develops effective support groups in both cultures and in the event one experiences periods of rejection from one of the cultures. LaFromboise et al. (1993) assert that such a move is vital to the development

of equal partnership for minorities in society's academic, social, and economic life.

In the current study, biculturalism was apparent, particularly with respect to bicultural efficacy. The students' bicultural efficacy was suggested by their reports of family life. They were capable of participating in culturally appropriate behavior in either cultural setting. In every case, the students were able to trace their growth from culturally conflicted parent-child relationships, where culture conflicts were frequently evoked, to an integration of both cultures.

Another indication of the students' sense of bicultural efficacy was in the self-designation of ethnic identity. Twenty-two students identified themselves as Chinese-American, and two as Asian-American, as opposed to only six as Chinese. Of those designating themselves as Chinese-American, several proffered the explanation that this designation indicated that they were a part of both cultures and both cultures were a part of them. The acceptance of and ease of operation in both cultures appeared to be a viable factor in dealing with cultural issues. Such efficacy appeared to have served the students well, for by developing and maintaining effective support groups in both the minority and majority culture, they were able to deal with expectations, at times conflicting, from both cultures. The students further displayed bicultural competence through involvement in ethnic student organizations and ethnic social and political action as well as in involvement in host culture organizations and activities, many of which were at the leadership level.

The third factor facilitating development of bicultural competence is bilingualism, which is considered essential in that it permits the individual to function in both cultures. A study with Chinese Canadians suggest a strong association between ethnic identification with and attitude towards the second culture, on one hand, and second-language proficiency, on the other hand (Young & Gardner, 1990). In the current research, all of

the students were second-generation and many were proficient in their indigenous dialect. By ages five or six, most began attending Chinese language school to learn to read and to speak Mandarin, the official dialect. A resurgence in interest in language and culture prompted many to enroll in Chinese language classes in college and to travel to countries where they would be able to practice the language.

Role repertoire refers to the range of culturally or situationally appropriate behaviors or roles of an individual. The adequacy of role repertoire is important in that the greater the range of behaviors or roles, the higher the level of cultural competence. The role repertoire of the Chinese-American undergraduates in this study appeared to be serving them adequately. Furthermore, the students were aware of and able to appropriately assume the different role- and behavioral expectations of each culture.

Groundedness, or the sense of being grounded in a social network of each culture, is vital to the management of a bicultural existence. This necessitates the ability to form and use external support systems, in concert with one's nuclear or extended family. Coping with differing expectations from each culture is augmented with the infusion of support from networks of both groups. In the current sample, the availability and use of the larger Chinese-American community were identified as critically important to the positive outcome of these students. Additionally, identification with other Chinese-American peers on campus through ethnic social, preprofessional, and religious organizations, while concurrently actively engaged in ongoing life of the larger university arena provided further opportunity for grounding.

Intercultural Development

Another perspective found to be salient in explaining the findings of the current study is the intercultural development model (Bennett, 1993), in which six sequential

stages are delineated, from ethnocentrism (belief that one's own cultural view is the only right one) to ethnorelativism (respect for and integration of aspects of other cultures). These six stages are as follows: (1) avoidance, which maintains an isolation and separation orientation between one's own and other cultures; (2) protection, which recognizes differences in cultures, polarizes them into unfavorable outgroup/favorable ingroup evaluations, or, less frequently, into favorable outgroup/unfavorable ingroup evaluations; (3) minimization, which overgeneralizes similarities and minimizes differences between cultures; (4) acceptance of differences, which involves respect for both behavioral and value differences; (5) adaptation to difference which enables one to understand and relate to people from other cultures and to interpret and respond to the world from another frame of reference; and (6) integration of differences, with culturally different aspects of one's identity created into a new whole.

In applying Bennett's (1993) model of intercultural development to the current study, it appears that the students have advanced to the final two stages of development. Some of the students described the process of growth toward integration of the two cultures by examining both cultures, integrating aspects of each, and formulating a distinct, coherent entity of "Chinese-American." In each case, Chinese cultural values remained an integral part of the students' experience; and although in varying stages of bicultural competence and intercultural development, the students evidenced movement toward developing an integrated "Chinese-American" identity. Figure V-1 traces the process of second culture acquisition, commencing with the child's formal education. Figure V-2 contrasts the individualism-collectivism continuum with the bicultural competence model, with the latter depicting two distinct cultures within which the biculturally competent individual effectively operates and from which a new, integrated entity is created.

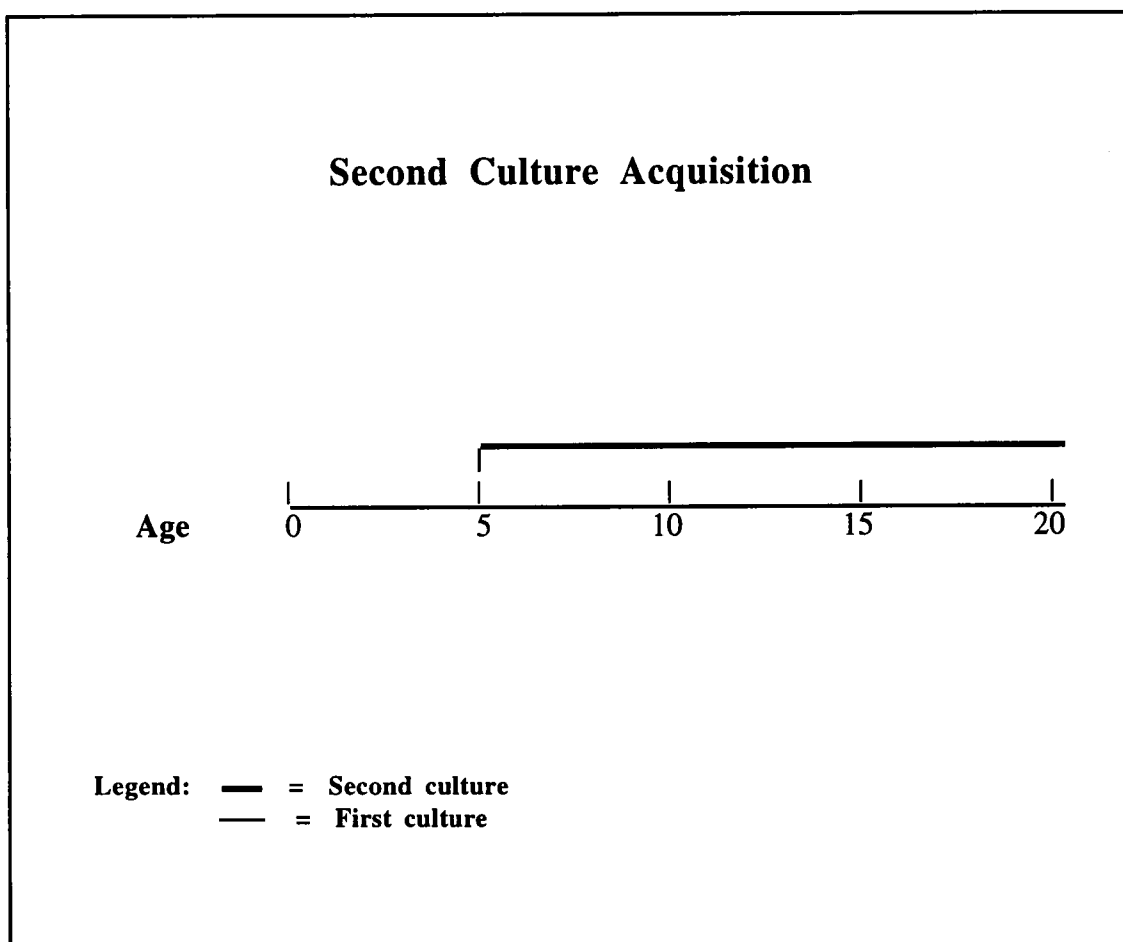


Figure V-1. Second Culture Acquisition.

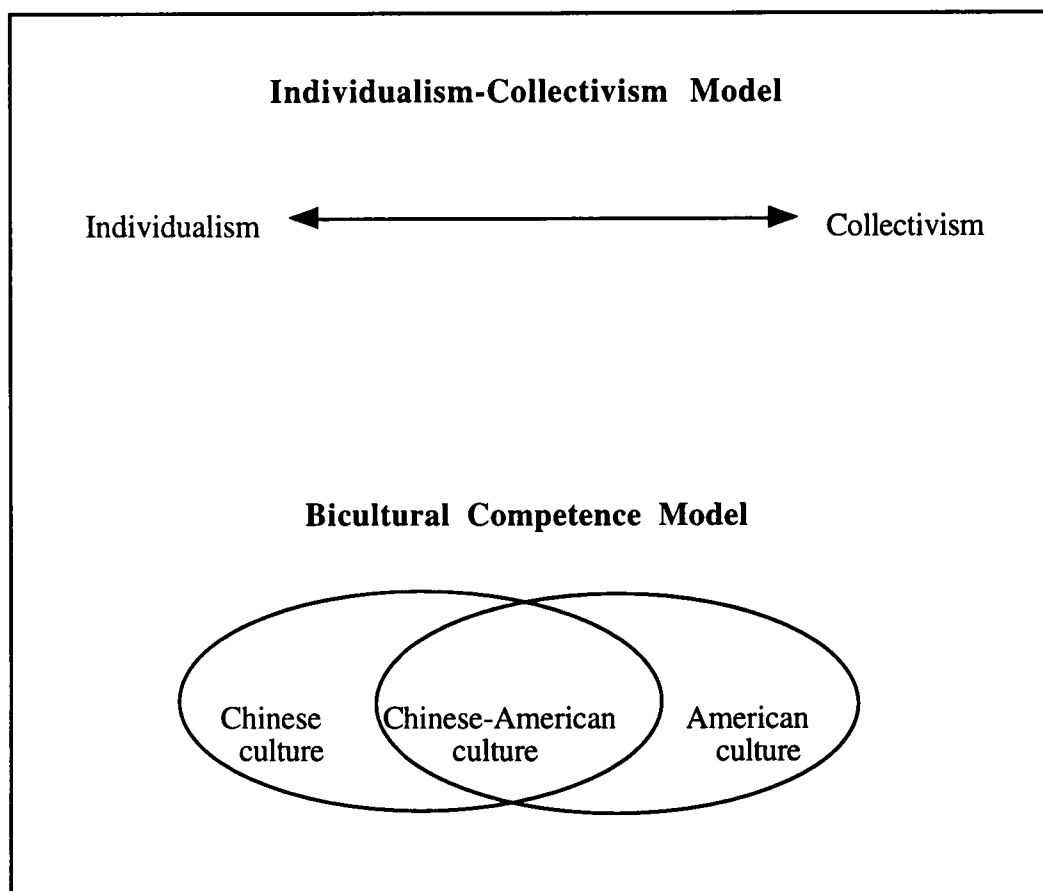


Figure V-2. Comparison of the Individualism-Collectivism Model with the Bicultural Competence Model.

Portrait of the Second-Generation Chinese-American Undergraduate

The model minority stereotype of Asian-American students elicited a surge of interest in the educational field in its attempt to discover the causation of high achievement. Behind the screen of success lurked indications that achievement may bring with it concomitant problems. Contrary to popular belief, the literature suggests that not all students achieve, and, moreover, despite any academic successes already experienced, the students may continue to experience pressure for excellence, with potential psychological costs.

In this study, however, such a portrayal was not totally substantiated. Although the findings did reveal a consistent pattern of high expectations, both internally as well as externally, the students expressed satisfaction with their current experience. The overall pattern emerging was one in which the intensity of parental expectations for academic achievement were initially experienced in elementary school, gaining momentum through middle school and high school, peaking around the last two years of high school, and decreasing drastically upon college entrance. Paralleling this pattern were parental expectations for career. The exception to this pattern was those situations in which a specific career choice had not been made or in which the selected career was incongruent with parental expectations, in which case the pressure remained.

However, upon embarking on the collegiate portion of the educational journey, the student's resultant maturity, coupled with parental satisfaction regarding admission to a prestigious university rendered him or her better equipped to deal with these differing expectations. The emerging portrayal suggests that many if not most of the students in the current study appeared to be progressing toward a high level of bicultural competence.

Implications for Higher Education

This study provides a beginning point for higher education to reassess its current status and its future direction in terms of understanding the experiences and meeting the needs of its burgeoning Chinese-American student population. First of all, a commitment, translated into allocation of resources, both fiscal and human, must be made to this historically silent, passive group, whose needs may have been masked by outward manifestations of academic success.

Endo (1980) maintains that the inevitable toll of cultural and parental pressures for academic achievement among Asian Americans is especially acute at the college level, where students are faced with culture conflicts, ethnic identity, and major decisions. In view of this argument, those in higher education who have contact with this population, particularly those in career counseling, academic advising, and student development, as well as those in the classroom, must be responsive to the needs of these students along with awareness and understanding of (1) the role of culture and possible culture conflicts operative in the student's experience, (2) the salience of perceived parental expectations upon the student's choice of academic major and career, and (3) possible emotional distress obscured by otherwise seemingly normal, and even exceptionally successful, student life.

This increased understanding provides an expanded context for institutional policies, which may lead to (1) reassessment of current practices in the approach, content, and delivery of academic advisement, career guidance, placement, and counseling services, (2) facilitation of bicultural competence and intercultural development, (3) enhancement of environmental support, and (4) addressing academic and psychological issues confronting Chinese-American students.

Reassessment of Current Practices

Institutions of higher education must reassess current policies and practices within a context of cultural sensitivity toward students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, in this case, Chinese-Americans. With the proliferation of ethnic Chinese immigrating to the United States, their greater representation in enrollment results in a wide range of academic abilities and needs. Thus any screen of success must be dismantled to permit objective assessment of current practices in the types and effectiveness of services to this increasingly heterogeneous group. The assessment in turn should constitute the driving force for strategic planning.

Facilitation of Bicultural Competence and Intercultural Development

In recent years a movement from the "melting pot" to the "mosaic" concept of diversity in American society has been witnessed. With emphasis upon ethnic identity and ethnic pride, a danger exists for increased isolationism through enclaves of ethnic segregation on today's campuses. Such isolationism has potential for generating conflict and a hostile campus climate.

Higher education then is faced with a dilemma. On one hand, the value of identity and support through participation in ethnic student organizations and activities cannot be overestimated. Indeed, the sample in this study described the importance of Chinese-American and Asian-American student organizations as a source of support and contributing to their sense of identity and belonging. On the other hand, however, mainstream integration is important not only to student retention (Jones, 1987) but also to the development of bicultural competence. Thus higher education must strike a delicate balance as it capitalizes on its pivotal position to promote both cultural diversity and mainstream integration.

According to Van Den Bergh (1991) and LaFromboise et al. (1993), it is critical for institutions of higher education to develop multicultural competence on its campuses; failure to do so may result in either poor retention or intensification of acculturative stress. LaFromboise et al. (1993) further posit that biculturally competent students may attain higher academic and vocational performance than their monoculturally competent peers.

Higher education should explore strategies for developing intercultural sensitivity among all faculty and students as well as bicultural competence among ethnic minority students. Astin's seminal work (1993) suggests that diversity activities are associated with positive outcomes and greater self-reported gains in cognitive and affective development and increased satisfaction in most areas of the college experience.

Assessment of current campus ethnic organizations, ethnic studies, multicultural awareness activities and celebrations, and intercultural sensitivity development programs and the impact they have upon the students may provide a beginning point for future direction. If, for example, some ethnic student organizations are found to promote ethnic separatism, then reevaluation must be made of their objectives and the desirability of those objectives in light of multicultural competence. Cooperative programming of majority and minority organizations may enhance mutual understanding and acceptance, while concurrently reducing segregationism and competitiveness (Astin, 1993).

In the current study, the students were highly involved in ethnic pursuits. Some of the students had enrolled in Asian-American Studies program and Chinese language classes, others had lived in Asian-American theme housing, and nearly all were active in ethnic student organizations -- all of which were endorsed enthusiastically for enhancement of personal growth and enrichment of the overall college experience.

Enhancement of Environmental Support

Many students in the current study spoke of the keen scholastic competition and academic rigor of this university. This has implications for higher education in examining its environmental support. The current sample identified the freshman year as a formidable time of having to adjust to the academic rigor and to realign one's self-concept from being "top in the class" to "just one of the masses." Particularly during the crucial first year, a freshman seminar and a mentorship program could prove invaluable in assisting the student through the maze of college life. The mentor would also serve as a role model as well as a knowledgeable, interested individual to whom the student can turn for answers, encouragement, and support.

Another source of environmental support is the presence and availability of faculty of the same cultural background, which, according to the research literature, impact students not only in terms of academic and career aspirations but also in the degree of acceptance experienced (Green, 1989; Loo & Rolison, 1986). The literature further identifies the low representation of Asian-American administrators, faculty, and staff as an issue which must be addressed and corrected (Endo, 1980). Their presence in administrative and faculty positions provides role modeling for Chinese-American students, demonstrating that opportunities exist beyond the stereotypical research arena.

Another need of all students but particularly of those experiencing pressure for achievement is socialization. Chinese-American students may be so focused on academic concerns to the neglect of social and developmental needs (Wang, Sedlacek, & Westbrook, 1992). A supportive network reduces the sense of isolation and alienation experienced by minorities on the periphery of campus life. Ethnic student organizations and small groups, both formal and informal, such as special interest groups and study groups can do much to

develop a sense of camaraderie. Students can also be directed to the larger community, where ethnic churches, associations, and other organizations welcome the opportunity to reach out to students and involve them in activities.

Academic Issues

One of the academic issues pertains to the classroom experience. Chinese-American students' low verbal participation in the classroom may be attributable to fears of appearing "stupid," of being wrong if their views are contested by the professor or peers, of giving the impression that the professor's teaching was deficient, or of being viewed as "show-offs" or "geeks" (Tanaguchi, 1989/1990). Thus, it behooves the professor to be cognizant of possible factors underlying this phenomenon. Classroom behavior of some of the students in the current sample was observed by the researcher when she visited classes. Although the students displayed respect, deference, and constraint in the classroom, these same students demonstrated a high level of spontaneity, warmth, and verbal fluency in the interview situation with the researcher.

Another academic issue revolves around the students' selection of academic major and career. Concern as well as curiosity have been shown about the narrow range of academic major fields selected by Asian Americans. Although the participants in this study selected a wide range of careers, the selection process for some of the students was arduous and fraught with obstacles, the primary one of which was dealing with parental expectations.

Those in academic advising must be aware that academic major and career selections may well be in response to parental expectations. Thus the selected career may not be the student's choice, and in cases of undeclared majors, there is the possibility that the student is conflicted regarding his or her own choice. Moreover, the advisor must

guard against any tendency to direct students into stereotypical Asian-culture and gender-role occupations rather than to encourage them to expand their scope of exploration.

The tendency of Asian Americans to present academic and career issues to their advisors when the real issues needing resolution are interpersonal (Leong, 1986) holds implications for those in student advisement, placement, and career counseling. Unmasking the real issue requires perceptivity on the part of the advisor and sufficient time for the student's hesitancy to be replaced by trust, so that he or she would feel safe to share his or her concerns. If in the advisor's judgment, the concerns require professional intervention, then appropriate referrals may need to be made.

Psychological Issues

Although the current study did not corroborate completely with the literature pertaining to the psychological distress of Asian Americans, higher education nevertheless must be aware of possible psychological issues of these students. It is ironic that the very attributes, such as high achievement, which make the student appear problem-free, in fact, may lie at the very core of his or her distress -- the sense of pressure to achieve. This implicates higher education in providing campus resources and/or linkages with community resources for prevention, early detection, and appropriate therapeutic intervention of emotional distress at this vulnerable point in the experience of Chinese-Americans. The consensus in the literature regarding Asian-American students' reluctance to seek help for interpersonal concerns (Gim et al., 1990; Solberg, Choi, Ritsma, & Jolly, 1994; Sue & Kirk, 1973; Sue & Morishima, 1982) further implicates university counseling centers to consider alternative, nontraditional sources of services, such as community elders, religious leaders, student organizations, and church groups (Solberg et al., 1994). The viability of these providers must first be assessed and then a nexus created by which

students would be linked to them so that follow through, particularly tenuous in a culture in which mental health problems are kept within the family, would be met with greater success.

Thus, with growing Chinese-American representation in colleges and universities, it becomes increasingly imperative for higher education to move beyond old assumptions of the problem-free Chinese-American student and to reassess current policies and practices and to make necessary changes so that an environment conducive to personal and educational development may be realized.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for further study include the following:

1. Replicating the study with comparison of undergraduates in a selective university with those in a non-selective institution.
2. Replicating the study with comparisons between high achievers and lower achievers.
3. Replicating the study with comparison of undergraduates from Chinese community background, reflecting homogeneity of cultural norms and expectations, with those from a predominantly host culture background.
3. Investigating a three-way comparison of students' expectations, perceived parental expectations, and actual parental expectations through independent interviews with parents as well as students.
4. Investigating the effects of students' high educational expectations upon cultural values orientation.
5. Using Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory to study the prevalence and

types of self-discrepancy and their effects upon this population.

6. Using Bennett's (1993) model of intercultural development to investigate students' pattern of progression through the six stages of development.
7. Examining the process of the development of bicultural competence (LaFromboise et al., 1993) in Chinese-Americans.
8. Exploring the experiences of high school juniors and seniors in terms of perceived parental pressure and support and their effects upon the students.

Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provided an opportunity for entering into and sharing in the experience of Chinese-American undergraduates as they navigate their journey in higher education and confront issues of personal and parental educational and career expectations. Although findings revealed differing expectations, at times with subsequent conflict, the emerging portrayal depicted a group of intelligent, high achieving, and insightful students manifesting resilience, coping strengths, solid goal orientation, and active engagement and satisfaction with life.

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APPENDICES

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Guide

I. Expectations for Educational and Career Achievement.

- A. Tell me about the academic expectations you have for yourself.
 - 1. How did you arrive at these expectations?
 - 2. What influenced you? How strong were (are) the influences?
- B. Tell me about your career goals.
 - 1. How did you arrive at these goals?
 - 2. What influenced you? How strong were (are) the influences?
- C. How important is it to you that you achieve these expectations and goals?
- D. How do you think you are progressing toward your goals?
- E. Tell me about expectations that you believe your parents have for you.
 - 1. Mother's? Father's?
 - 2. Have they conveyed these expectations to you? If so, how?
- F. What do you think of their expectations?
- G. Compare their expectations for you with your own expectations.

II. Effects of Differing Expectations.

- A. How are you affected by differing expectations?
 - 1. Describe.
 - 2. Explain.
- B. How important is it to you that you meet your parents' expectations?
- C. What are the reasons you should (or should not) meet their expectations?
- D. What are the reasons you would (or would not) meet their expectations?
- E. How would you feel if you didn't meet their expectations? Describe.
- F. How would you feel if you pursued different goals? Describe.

III. Mediation of differing expectations.

- A. When your parents' standards, expectations, and goals differ from yours, what do you do?
 - 1. Describe.

2. Explain.
3. Give examples.

B. How effective have you been in dealing with these differences?

1. Describe.
2. Explain.
3. Give examples.

C. How satisfied are you in the ways you have been dealing with these differences?

Demographic Data

Age ____ Sex ____ Birth order ____ Major ____ Year ____ Place of residence ____
Ethnic identity: Self ____ Mother ____ Father ____
Acculturation: Self ____ Mother ____ Father ____
Occupation: Mother ____ Father ____
Educational level: Mother ____ Father ____

Notes/Observations/Reflections

UNIVERSITY OF [REDACTED]



COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION
OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
THE A & E BUILDING #1340
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 642-7461 • FAX: [REDACTED] 643-6272
e-mail: subjects@[REDACTED]

October 31, 1996

Ruth Wang Liu
2208 Mountain Brook Lane
Ooltewah, TN 37363

RE: "Educational and Career Expectations of Chinese-American Undergraduates" - University of
Tennessee Dissertation Research - Conducted at the University of [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Liu:

Based on our acceptance of the approval of this project by the University of Tennessee's IRB, we have approved the project referred to above as defined in 45 CFR 46.114-Cooperative Research. CPHS policy is not to renew administrative approval to any research project originating in another institution unless the project has a current approval from the IRB of the originating institution.

The number of this administrative approval is 96-11-89. Please refer to this number in all future correspondence.

The expiration date of this approval is October 15, 1997. Approximately six weeks before the expiration date, we will send you a continuation/renewal request form. Please fill out the form and return it to the Committee, according to the instructions. Be sure to include a copy of the current approval from the originating IRB.

Please note that even though the Committee has approved your project, you must bring promptly to our attention any changes in the design or conduct of your research that affect human subjects.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact the CPHS staff at 642-7461; FAX 643-6272; E-Mail subjects@[REDACTED].

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J.S. Watson", written over a blacked-out rectangular area.

John S. Watson
Professor in the Graduate School
Department of Psychology
Chair, CPHS

JSW:nan

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE



October 16, 1996

Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0140
PHONE: (423) 974-3466
FAX: (423) 974-2805
URL: <http://www.ra.utk.edu/ora>

IRB #: 5183 B

Title: Educational and Career Expectations of Chinese-American Undergraduates

ADVISOR:

Ruth Wang Liu
Leadership Studies in Education Unit
2208 Mountain Brook Lane
Ooltewah, TN 37363

Dr. Jeffrey Aper
Leadership Studies in Education Unit
233 Claxton Addition
CAMPUS MAIL - 3400

Your project listed above was reviewed. It qualified for expedited review and has been approved under Category #9. This approval is for a period ending one year from the date of this letter and is contingent upon review and approval from the IRB at the University [REDACTED]

This office will send you a renewal notice one month prior to the anniversary of your approval date. Please provide us with a prompt notification of project termination should this occur prior to your renewal date.

Your responsibilities during the conduct of this project include the following:

1. To obtain prior approval from the IRB or Coordinator of Compliances before instituting any changes in the project.
2. To retain signed informed consent forms from subjects for at least three years following completion of the project.
3. To submit a Form D to report changes in the project or to report project termination.

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I wish you every success in your research endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven B. Pulik'.

Steven B. Pulik
Coordinator of Compliances

cc: Dr. Grady Bogue

Appendix D

2208 Mountain Brook Lane
Ooltewah, TN 37363
October 31, 1996

██████████, Chair
Department of English
322 Wheeler Hall
University of ██████████
██████████

Dear Professor ██████████

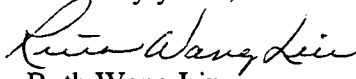
I am a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee. As part of my doctoral dissertation, I will be interviewing 25 Chinese-American undergraduates regarding their expectations for educational and career achievement. Because of the dearth of Chinese-Americans at UT, I will be doing data collection at ██████████. I have already received approval from ██████████ Committee for Protection of Human Subjects.

As one possible method for obtaining subjects, I would like permission to make a brief announcement in two or three freshman English classes, inviting interested students to meet me after class for more information about my study.

I will be arriving in ██████████ Sunday, November 3, where I will be staying for two to three weeks. In the interest of time, I can be contacted by fax (423) 899-1160, or by phone (423) 899-4477 through Saturday, after which I can be contacted in ██████████ at 525-3739. Or I can contact your office when I come to campus on Monday, at which time I can have in hand the original copy of CPHS approval.

Thank you kindly for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,


Ruth Wang Liu

Appendix E

2208 Mountain Brook Lane
Ooltewah, TN 37363
November 4, 1996

[REDACTED], Coordinator
Asian-American Studies
516 Barrows Hall
University of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

It was so good to meet you yesterday! As per our conversation, I am herewith outlining my research needs.

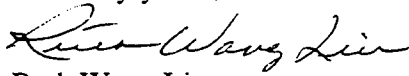
My doctoral dissertation is on the Educational and Career Expectations of Chinese-American Undergraduates, and I will be here on campus during the next two weeks to interview second-generation Chinese-Americans for the purpose of exploring their educational and career aspirations--factors influencing their decisions, pressures experienced, and other relevant information. Strict confidentiality will be maintained, and each participant will be compensated with \$10 for participating in a 45-60 minute interview. Interested students may call me at 525-3739 for further information and for scheduling appointments. The results of this study should sensitize us to the needs of Chinese-American students toward goal attainment, so that we in higher education may respond more effectively.

I would greatly appreciate your faculty making announcements in their classes as soon as possible.

Enclosed is a copy of the [REDACTED] CPHS approval of this project.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,


Ruth Wang Liu

Appendix F

Date: Sun, 20 Oct 1996 10:25:39 -0400 (EDT)
From: Ruth Liu <rliu@moccasun.utc.edu>
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Chinese-American Undergraduates

Hi Derrick!

As a follow-up of our phone conversation yesterday, let me just reiterate that I am a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee, doing my dissertation on educational and career expectations of Chinese-American undergraduates. Because my University does not have sufficient numbers of Chinese-Americans, I am looking to [REDACTED] for my sample.

I need approximately 25 second-generation, single Chinese-Americans between the ages of 18-24, for a 45-60 minute individual interview. Strict confidentiality will be maintained, and each participant will receive \$10 at the end of the interview.

If you could disseminate this information to your club members and to any other students fitting the criteria, I would greatly appreciate it. Interested students can e-mail me, and I will send them more specific information so they can make their decision. I will be on campus hopefully in November for the interviews, depending how soon I hear from the [REDACTED] Committee for Protection of Human Subjects. Once I receive the approval, then I will set up appointments with the students at their convenience.

Thank you so kindly for your help!

Ruth Wang Liu

Appendix G

Date: Fri, 18 Oct 1996 14:40:13 -0400 (EDT)
From: Ruth Liu <rliu@moccasun.utc.edu>
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Research with Chinese-American undergraduates

Hi John!

Thank you for the information you gave me last evening. As I mentioned to you on the phone, I am anticipating doing my dissertation data collection on the [REDACTED] campus, hopefully in November; if not, in February. The reason I have chosen [REDACTED] is that here at the University of Tennessee, we do not have enough Chinese-Americans.

I am interested in the experience of second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates as they deal with expectations for academic and career achievement, both their own and the expectations which their parents have for them. I will be conducting a 45-60 minute interview on an individual basis with approximately 25 students. Strict confidentiality will be maintained. I have the information in writing for the students to read before they decide to participate. Ten dollars will be paid each participant.

If you have an upcoming club meeting or a newsletter, where you can make this announcement, I would greatly appreciate it. Interested students can contact me to set up an appointment at their convenience.

Thank you so very much for your help!

Ruth Wang Liu

Appendix H

Date: Thu, 31 Oct 1996 21:22:47 -0500 (EST)
From: Ruth Liu <rliu@moccasun.utc.edu>
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Chinese-American research

Hi Derrick!

I have received approval from [REDACTED] to conduct my research, so I will be flying out this Sunday, November 3. If there are any second generation Chinese-American undergraduates who would be interested in participating in a 45-60 interview with me regarding their educational and career expectations, would you mind getting their names and phone numbers? Then I can get directly in touch with them to give them information about the research. I will call you upon my arrival.

Thank you so much for all your help!

Ruth Liu

Educational and Career Expectations of Chinese Americans Informed Consent and Disclosure Form

My name is Ruth Liu. I am a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee, and I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation research, which deals with educational and career goals of Chinese-American college students.

If you agree to take part, I will set up an appointment with you for a 45-60 minute interview to discuss your college experience and your educational expectations and career goals. I will also ask you about expectations that other people in your life have for you and what you do when those expectations and goals are different from your own. The interview will take place on campus in an empty classroom. I will record the interview on a tape recorder.

This research holds no risk to you, and although there is no substantial benefit to you for participating, my hope is that what is learned through this research will help faculty and staff in colleges and universities to better understand the experiences and needs of Chinese-Americans.

All the information from the interview will be kept confidential. A transcriptionist and myself will be the only ones who will have access to the tape; the tape and the typed conversation of the interview will be kept in a locked file until after the research is finished, at which time the tape will be erased and the typed papers destroyed. A number will be used to identify your tape and papers, but the sheet linking your name to the code number will be kept in a separate locked file, until the research is finished, and at that time the sheet will be destroyed. Your name and any identifying information will not appear on any reports.

At the end of the interview, I will pay you \$10 for participating, even in the event that you choose to end early.

Your participation is strictly voluntary. You are free to refuse to take part. If you choose to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any questions, and you are free to end the interview any time you wish. Whether or not you participate, your association with this university or any other university will not be affected at all.

If you have any questions about the research, you may call me, Ruth Liu, at 525-3739. I have read the consent form and agree to take part in the research.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Demographic Data of Participants

Gender

Male	10
Female	20

Age

18	2
19	15
20	8
21	5

Birth Order

Oldest (n=16)	
Only child	1
Older of 2	11
Oldest of 3	4
Middle (n=1)	
2nd of 3	1
Youngest (n=14)	
2nd of 2	8
3rd of 3	1
4th of 4	4

Year in College

Freshman	2
Sophomore	12
Junior	8
Senior	8

Field of Academic Major

Humanities	5
Social Sciences	9
Biological Sciences	6
Engineering/Computer Science	3
Business	5
Undeclared	2

Place of Residence during College

On Campus	11
Off Campus	
With Parents	3
Independent	14

Demographic Data of Participants

Socioeconomic Class

Lower	0
Lower Middle	0
Middle	28
Upper middle	2

Parents' Educational Level

	Father	Mother
High School	1	0
Technical/Trade School	2	1
Some College	3	5
College Graduate	7	16
Master's Degree	10	6
Ph.D.	4	1
M.D.	2	0
Unknown (Father deceased, Mother elderly)	1	1

Parents' Occupation

Business	15	20
Engineer	7	0
Physician	2	0
Research	1	1
Technical	2	2
Unemployed	2	6
Unknown (Father deceased, Mother divorced)	1	1

Ethnic Identity

	Self	Father	Mother
Chinese	6	25	21
Taiwanese	0	2	3
Chinese-American	22	3	6
Asian-American	2	0	0
American	0	0	0

Level of Acculturation

1 - 1.5	0	9	8
2 - 2.5	3	15	16
3 - 3.5	13	3	4
4 - 4.5	10	1	1
Unknown/Unspecified	0	2	1

TRANSCRIPTIONIST AGREEMENT

I have been instructed regarding the confidential nature of the interviews, and I understand the importance of maintaining strict confidentiality. By signing this form, I am agreeing to the following conditions:

1. To keep the tapes and typed transcripts in a secure, metal, locked file cabinet while in my possession, except during the time that I am actively transcribing.
2. To delete names or other identifying data from the document.
3. To avoid disclosure of the contents of the interview with anyone.

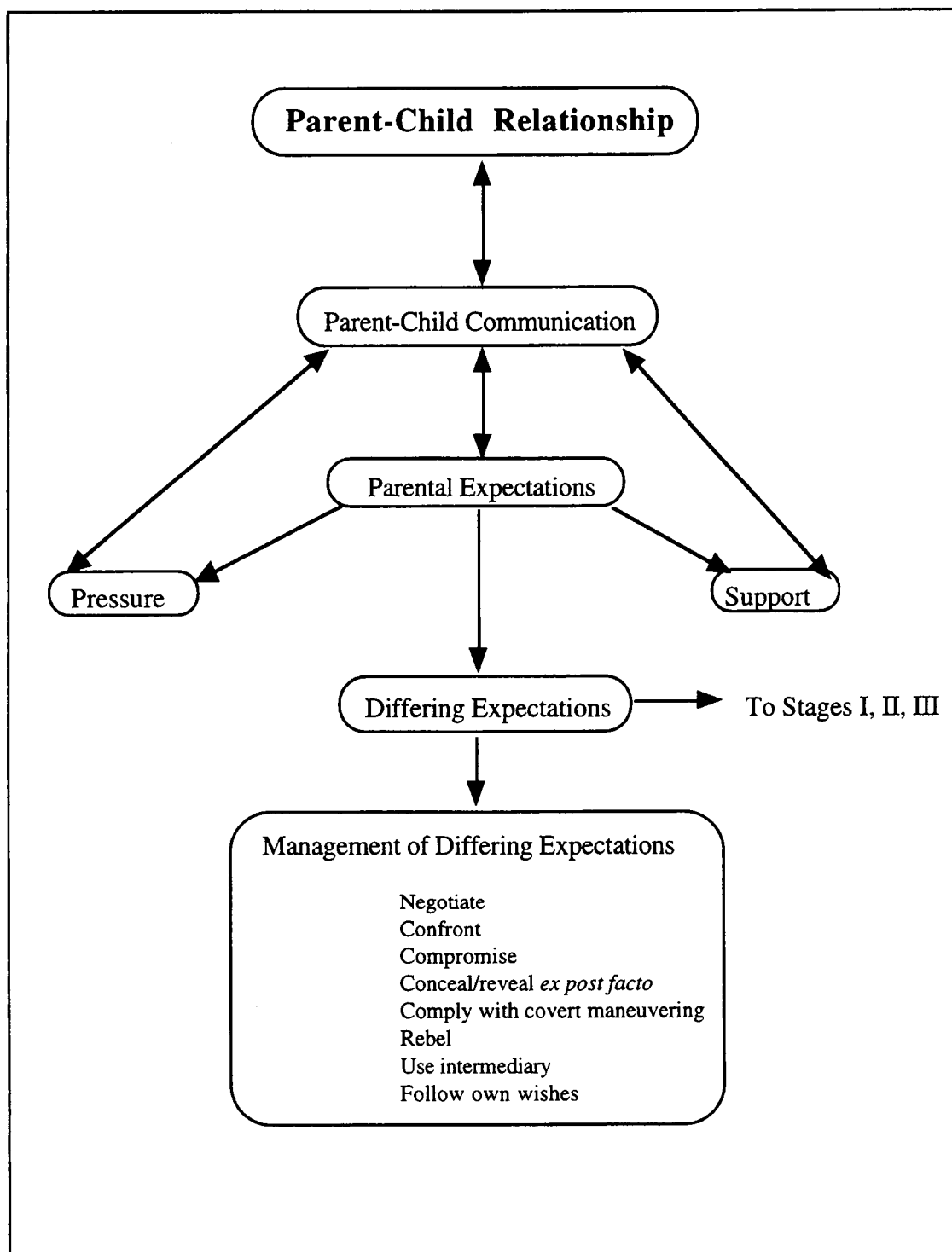
I am also agreeing to provide transcription services at \$_____ per hour, which will be paid at the completion of each interview. The transcription will be done at the following location:

In the event that these arrangements are found to not be satisfactory, I will be paid for the hours already spent in transcription, and no further obligation exists.

Signature

Date

RELATIONSHIP OF CATEGORIES



VITA

Ruth Wang Liu was born in Chungking, China, and immigrated at a very young age with her family to the United States. After graduating from Broadview Academy in LaFox, Illinois, she entered Union College at Lincoln, Nebraska, where she received a bachelor of science degree with a major in nursing. Her master of science degree was obtained in psychiatric nursing from the University of California, San Francisco.

Her professional background includes working in the capacity of nursing supervisor on an inpatient psychiatric service at Loma Linda University Medical Center, Loma Linda, California, and clinical nurse specialist in community mental health for the city and county of San Francisco. It was in this latter position that she was involved in developing community-based services directed toward education, prevention, and early intervention of mental health problems with Chinese-American youth. She has also served on the faculties of the University of Illinois College of Nursing, Chicago; Loma Linda University School of Nursing, Loma Linda, California; and Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee.

Doctoral work in Leadership Studies in Education with a concentration in higher education was commenced in 1993 and culminated with a doctoral degree awarded on May 16, 1997.